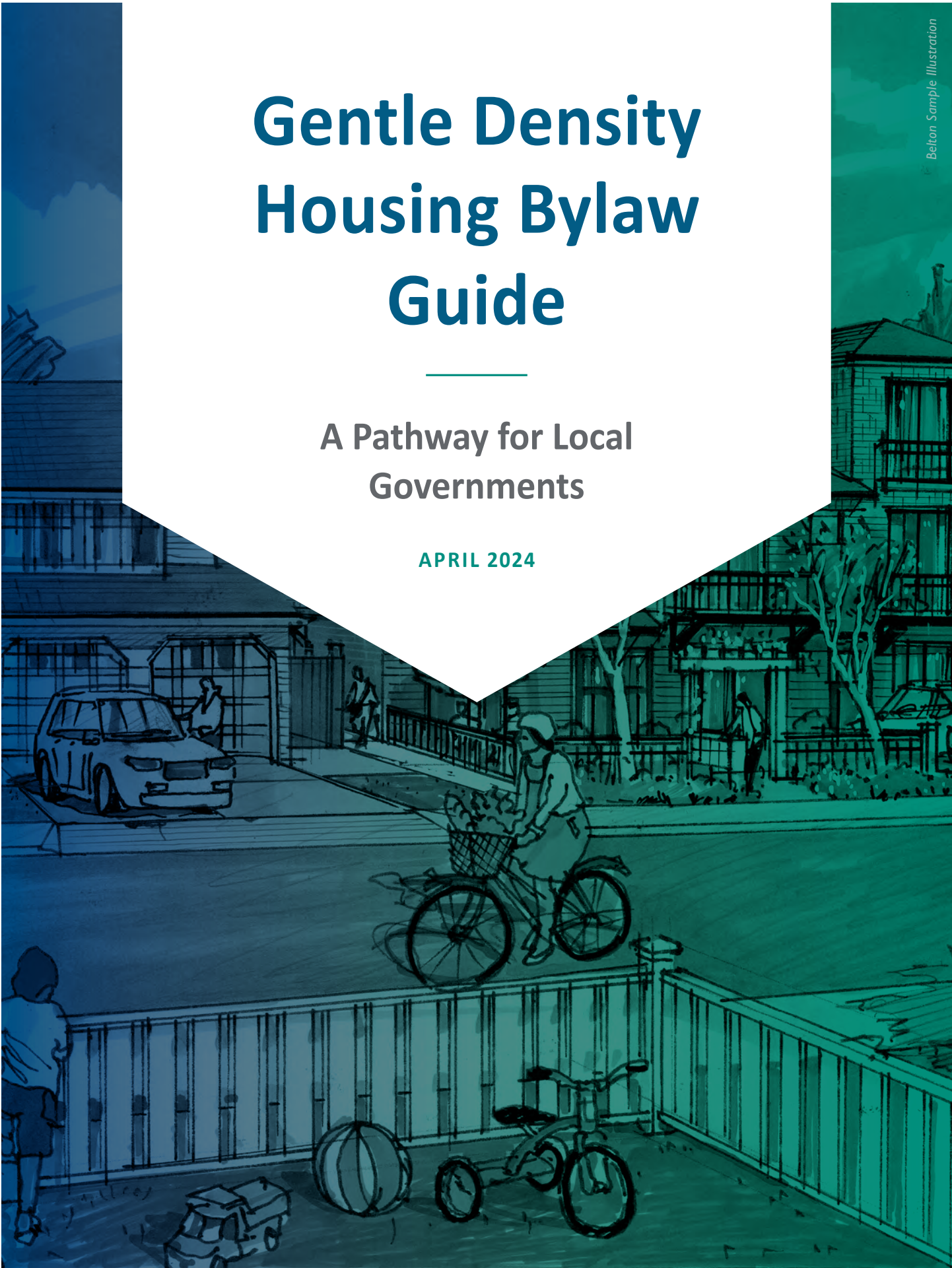


Gentle Density Housing Bylaw Guide

A Pathway for Local
Governments

APRIL 2024



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It is the responsibility of all persons undertaking the design and construction, and rental of gentle density housing to review and comply with all current Building Code requirements, zoning bylaws, and all other applicable regulations.



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Small Housing is a non-profit organization that promotes the development of diverse, smaller-format housing forms in neighbourhoods and communities throughout Canada - to provide housing choices that better serve the needs of our growing and changing populations.

For over a decade, we have promoted policy and technical innovation, produced new tools and resources, and supported government and industry partners to advance gentle density housing options.

Sample gentle density illustrations throughout this document are available along with floor plans, site plans and an example pro forma financial analysis at our Gentle Density Toolbox at toolbox.smallhousing.ca.



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Preface

The zoning rules that control the types and sizes of homes that can be built in a community should reflect and evolve along with, the changing needs of the people who want to live there.

For decades, the predominant form of residential zoning in many communities has favoured larger homes and lots, locking neighbourhoods and residential lands in a pattern of development that is out of reach for households struggling with increasing costs and rents. Even those already living in low-density neighbourhoods are having a hard time answering the questions: “Will my kids be able to afford to move out?” and “Will I be able to stay in my neighbourhood when it's time to downsize?”. Without the ability to add new homes in these low-density areas, the supply of homes has not kept pace with population growth, and this barrier has contributed to the housing crisis we are facing in Canada.

Fortunately, these outdated rules can be rewritten to better suit our present and future needs. Communities across North America are reconsidering zoning rules that once prevented citizens from adding a second small dwelling on their property for an aging family member, or pooling resources with friends to build and live in a multiplex together. These updates can unlock the potential to add more housing in greater variety to existing neighbourhoods to better accommodate our growing and changing population.

Along with offering smaller-format homes that are more financially attainable, these gentle density options have a host of potential benefits to offer, including:

- Access to established neighbourhoods close to parks, transit, shops and services, and jobs;
- Opportunities to combine intergenerational living with separate kitchens for and autonomy;
- Lower energy consumption, and costs relative to detached homes; and,
- Less time spent on cleaning and maintenance.

The momentum to allow more flexibility and choice for what can be built on a property has been recently spurred on by provincial mandates in B.C. and Ontario. It has also been encouraged through federal funding offered to municipalities and provinces that advocate for the elimination of exclusionary zoning and promote ‘as-of-right’ (i.e. without rezoning) permissions to build up to four homes per lot in communities across the country.



Getting these gentle density homes actually built in significant numbers will require more than just a rewrite of outdated and inflexible zoning bylaws (see the box below on **first-wave and second-wave barriers**), but this first step is needed and will open up the possibility of future changes in finance, construction, and other related practices.

This Guide focuses on documenting the “story so far” about the paths being chosen by local governments in British Columbia as they consider changes to their zoning bylaws to allow ‘small-scale multi-unit housing’. It is intended as a resource for communities in other provinces seeking to adjust their zoning rules to achieve a better fit with the needs of the people who want to live there.

Depending on the local context and provincial or territorial land use planning framework, it may be necessary to establish the overarching policy foundation that supports zoning changes for GDH before making regulatory changes. There are also many related policies and bylaws, such as fees and charges applicable to GDH, or development standards related to multi-unit housing, which can impact feasibility of GDH. While those related policies are outside the scope of this Guide, it may be useful to refer to the public benefits of GDH described on the following page, and the Small Housing Gentle Density Messaging Guidebook during public engagement while advocating for supportive policies.

Did you know?

The [CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund](#) identified the top 10 best practices for communities seeking to access funds and bolster housing supply and affordability. The top practice identified was:

I. End exclusionary zoning

- Stop low-density zoning and regulation that excludes housing types such as affordable and social housing in residential areas.
- Encourage high density by allowing mixed-use development and high-density residential as-of-right within proximity to urban cores and transit corridors.
- This includes adopting by-laws to adopt more as-of-right zoning measures, from the number of units to storeys.

First- and Second-wave Barriers

In most jurisdictions, the housing supply system needs to be reformed and updated to enable new gentle density housing supply to be produced.

This can begin with removing "**first-wave barriers**" — key zoning and regulatory conditions that overly constrain the number, configuration, and massing of homes on a parcel (including height, setbacks, and floorspace), require excessive onsite parking, and impose onerous or discretionary design guidelines (regulating materials, roof angles, and other architectural elements).

Reform also requires system actors such as governments, lenders, construction industry, and other housing supply proponents to remove "**second-wave barriers**" — such as limited access to project financing, constraints in industry and supply chain capacity, lack of small-scale builder and citizen developer awareness and know-how, and complexity of local government approvals processes.

Both classes of barriers need to be addressed in order to facilitate new housing supply to come online. Progressive governments are increasingly stepping outside their traditional roles to convene actors and catalyze these necessary changes.

Why choose more compact development?

How gentle density housing can benefit a community

To increase the supply and diversity of housing in our communities, we need to look not just to outward expansion but to updating the form of our existing neighbourhoods. As part of a comprehensive strategy, this will mean more intensive and concentrated redevelopment in some areas where appropriate, and a more incremental and distributed form of redevelopment in others. Gentle density housing should be part of a broader effort to support infill in our communities, along with greater density near transit stations.

Possible Public Benefits are Increased:

- + Household savings and affordability
- + Local workforce housing, yielding decreases in commuter traffic
- + Transit ridership and transit efficiency
- + Economic opportunity
- + Viability of local services and commercial, including “mom and pop” stores
- + Housing options, intergenerational capacity (young families, and seniors aging-in-place) and community vibrancy
- + Social connectivity and resilience
- + Tax base
- + Infrastructure savings (versus sprawled development forms)
- + Preservation of farmland and natural areas
- + Energy conservation and emissions reductions
- + Security and reduced crime



There has been a growing understanding of the public benefits that can be enjoyed through more compact residential development with a diversity of housing choices. While small in scale, gentle density housing can play a big role in achieving these public benefits. Local governments across the country are advancing new initiatives to thoughtfully introduce (and re-introduce) gentle density and smaller housing options into existing residential neighbourhoods. These housing options provide a significant opportunity for local governments seeking efficient and scalable housing supply strategies, and for neighbourhoods

desiring greater housing choices that can better provide for their evolving needs. Other local governments are watching their example, learning how they can also change their zoning rules and enable more housing options to help complete their neighbourhoods.

This Guide was prepared by Small Housing and partners to support more local governments in taking the path of more flexible zoning standards that have the potential to realize significant public benefits and better meet the needs of our growing and changing population.

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I. Guide Intent

This Guide serves to assist local governments developing regulations for gentle density housing (GDH). Drawing from the experiences of local governments in British Columbia mandated to enable gentle density housing, and sharing the wide range of approaches that could be taken, the Guide provides technical and procedural insight, from basic zoning bylaw amendments to a suite of regulatory changes to make it easier to produce gentle density housing, meeting the needs of Canadians for more diverse housing options.

The considerations and key questions in this Guide are relevant for jurisdictions across Canada looking to end exclusionary zoning practices in their communities. While the Guide is framed around legislative frameworks for British Columbia, many of the options for workplan tasks, tailoring zoning, and reviewing other regulatory elements will apply across the country.

Readers from B.C. should note that this Guide references, but does not replace, the authoritative Provincial Policy Manual & Site Standards (“the Manual”) published by the Province of British Columbia in December 2023. While the Manual provides a more holistic overview of the B.C. legislative requirements for small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) and provides policy considerations, this Guide expands on the practical implementation considerations that may also be helpful to local governments outside B.C. embarking on a path to enabling more inclusive residential neighbourhoods. It includes a suggested workplan, discussion around zoning parameters, and insight into other considerations to be made during the process. The opportunity for local governments throughout Canada is to learn from the steps taken so far in B.C. and apply the relevant principles in their own communities to better enable more gentle density housing.



Sample Home Design: Koo's from toolbox.smallhousing.ca

2. What is Gentle Density Housing (GDH)?

Gentle density housing solutions refer to the re-imagination of the single-dwelling zoned neighbourhood through small-scale infill development. These forms range from backyard cottages, laneway homes, and secondary suites to houseplexes and infill rowhouses.

Other terms, such as missing middle housing, small-scale housing, houseplex, and multiplex, amongst others, have also been used to describe gentle density housing. In functional terms, gentle density housing typically adds to or replaces single-detached housing with a larger but similarly scaled building that has multiple units while using existing lot layouts.

Infill refers to this development occurring in what are traditionally single-detached neighbourhoods, and

redevelopment occurs usually without subdivision or lot consolidation. Six units or fewer is common; however some communities, such as Vancouver and Halifax, are enabling up to eight units on an existing lot. Each unit would typically, but not always, have its own exterior facing door.

Gentle density housing can incorporate various typologies and arrangements on a single lot, such as a four-unit building, a pair of duplexes, a new duplex added to a lot that already has a house (maybe also with a suite), or a new duplex with each unit containing suites. One of the benefits of GDH type zoning is the flexibility of housing type that it can offer while maintaining a scale of building that is similar to existing traditional neighbourhoods.



Terms Used in B.C.

Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)

In British Columbia, Bill 44 Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023 (Bill 44) requires the implementation of small-scale, multi-unit housing (SSMUH) zoning by June 2024. SSMUH is a newer term used in British Columbia which encompasses several types of housing development that are similar in scale to traditional single-detached but containing multiple housing units on an existing lot.

The purpose of adopting permissive SSMUH zoning is to increase the diversity of housing types throughout communities, provide more opportunities to develop housing at a lower cost, streamline approvals processes, minimize speculative real-estate transactions, and put an end to exclusionary zoning practices which have prevented the addition of new housing in existing neighbourhoods.

The term SSMUH is used within this Guide to refer specifically to B.C.'s legislation and local government compliance.

Restricted Zones

SSMUH legislation in B.C., enacted by Bill 44, effectively requires local governments to increase the allowable density on a given residential lot in what are defined as "Restricted Zones." Broadly speaking, "Restricted Zones" capture all zoning designations in local government zoning bylaws. This limits land uses to the form of single-detached dwellings in most of B.C. and to duplexes in urban areas. Not all lands within "Restricted Zones" will be impacted in the same way; this depends on population, urban growth boundaries, lot size, and availability of servicing.

In almost every case of zoning throughout B.C. which currently only allows single-detached housing, local governments will be required to allow, as-of-right (i.e. without rezoning required), an accessory dwelling (which may be either a secondary suite in the primary home, or, under certain circumstances, a detached accessory dwelling). In many cases local governments will be required to allow as-of-right up to four housing units on existing lots which previously were restricted to single-detached and/or duplex dwellings.



Photo credit: Province of B.C. Ministry of Housing. Learn more [here](#).

Note that this Guide focuses on enabling GDH zoning for up to and including 4 units. References to 6-unit developments, as required in B.C. under certain circumstances (lot size and proximity to frequent transit) by Bill 44, are made in limited cases.

3. Early Learnings from the B.C. Experience

Clearing the regulatory path to support GDH may be a significant change in practice for communities more familiar with typical exclusionary zoning practices that assumed only one household would live on each residential property. While the shift to enabling more households to live together on the same property does require a deliberate rethinking of older approaches to housing a growing population, the chance to provide fairer housing opportunities and use land and infrastructure more efficiently is worth the effort.

The next sections outline some of the most common conversations and concerns related to implementing SSMUH zoning, which may also apply in communities outside British Columbia that are looking to allow gentle density housing. They are followed by an example workplan for GDH zoning adoption, as well as detailed guidance on zoning and related bylaw preparation. Communities outside British Columbia without legislated timelines for bylaw adoption can modify the work plan to add or expand on steps required locally, such as consulting with relevant utility providers about their capacity to service gentle density housing, or build in further opportunities for public input.



3.1. Planning Approach

Previously, new GDH developments often necessitated a complex, costly, and time-consuming rezoning process, involving thorough analysis and political and public examination. Many local governments treat three or more units as multi-family for the purposes of Development Permit Areas and as such, following zoning, there are often additional development permit requirements that sometimes involve additional political approval. In these same municipalities, single-detached housing projects are not subject to the same requirements, often proceeding directly to building permit.

Following the adoption of zoning that enables GDH, these associated development processes will likely need to change. Without the need for protracted approvals and political debate, resulting processes will be simplified and will make development processes for GDH similar to the existing processes for single-detached. This change is a move to prioritize housing delivery and will have an impact on how local governments need to approach growth management, development financing, and development approvals that remain necessary to accommodate growing populations.

While zoning reform will increase the as-of-right density of parcels, developers, and builders will still be required to meet minimum requirements for the BC Building Code and permit processes, water, sewer, and stormwater servicing, comply with any development permit processes and any development cost charges. It is important for communities to consider how other related bylaws may need to be revised.

3.2. Collaborating for Integrated Service Delivery

Cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration are critical to the bylaw reform process — and information-sharing and considerations of trade-offs should be encouraged. Early collaboration with your local power utility is recommended for efficient planning of electrical infrastructure. The more collaborative the process, the less challenging implementation will be.

To begin the GDH zoning bylaw adoption process consider having a person in a planning capacity with a broad knowledge of development and long-range planning facilitate the conversation. It is good practice to assign roles, delegate responsibility, and schedule several cross-departmental meetings each with clear goals to facilitate the necessary decisions, including on important trade-offs, to support the bylaw amendments. Recognize that the legislative requirements and associated timelines are challenging for everyone involved, and that this requires

additional time away from typical duties. Consider discussing the impacts the mandatory bylaw amendments may have on various departments and adjusting work plans for other projects accordingly. The more up-front conversations regarding the associated roles and responsibilities, the better.

Meetings with numerous people across different professions, while challenging to coordinate, are recommended for a process such as this to determine the issues at hand, improve understanding, and identify roles. It is recommended that key decision makers be engaged as quickly as possible and that key concerns and required action steps are documented.

Collaboration with Builders and Developers

Consider hosting workshops and information sessions with builders and developers to understand what the market wants and what is most important to get the homes built. In many cases, developers of gentle density housing may be traditional single-detached home builders. These builders may lack experience with multi-unit construction but may be interested in expanding their services to include gentle density housing forms. In addition, involving developers with experience in multi-unit housing could provide insight regarding the market feasibility of gentle density housing forms and how regulations can best accommodate gentle density housing development. Reach out to Small Housing if you'd like resources and technical supports for engaging with your local industry actors.



3.3. Growth Management and Infrastructure Delivery

Growth in municipalities in British Columbia has been regulated largely through the rezoning process, with overarching land-use guidance provided by Official Community Plans. A rezoning application typically includes detailed servicing reviews with approval conditional on infrastructure upgrades. This has allowed local governments to address infrastructure upgrades on a case-by-case basis. The changes resulting from upzoning will require local governments to take a different approach to managing infrastructure needs related to growth.

Consideration will need to be given to subdivision and development servicing bylaws, specifically to how and if they are applied at building permit stage, and to the difference in standards for single-detached housing and multi-family housing (if the municipality decides that GDH will fall into the latter or create a new category). This includes a review of the levels of service established for proposed development.

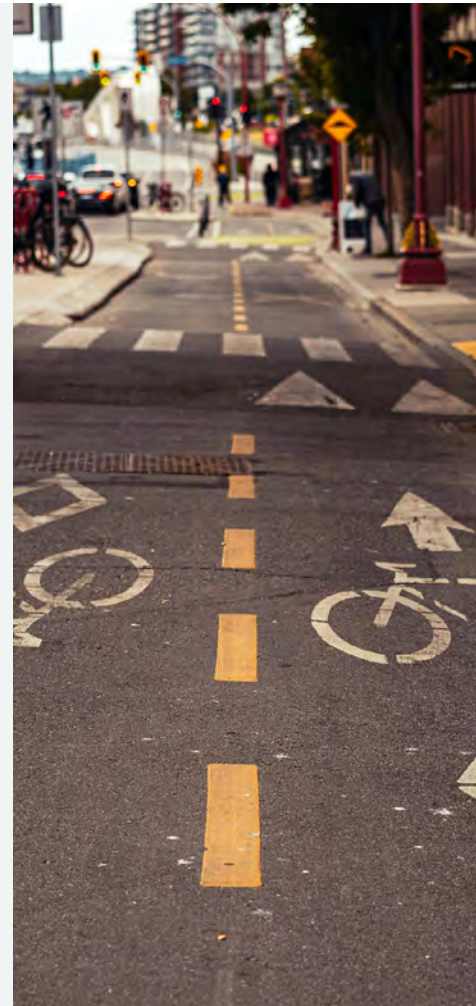
In light of the importance of community housing needs, local governments should carefully consider perceived need versus actual need of infrastructure. Requiring significant infrastructure work to be completed by an individual project at the building permit stage is an option, but given the scale of most projects, that additional cost will likely render GDH projects financially infeasible. This defeats the purpose of the legislation and, in context of overall housing need, is a loss to the community. Local governments will need to readdress their infrastructure growth management strategies to follow a more adaptive and proactive approach, particularly in areas where GDH growth is expected to occur.

Cutting Costs with the “Road Diet”

Infill development is an efficient way to make use of infrastructure that is already in place. There is potential to divide the costs of sewers, pipes, and roads amongst more dwelling units which lowers the cost of maintaining and operating infrastructure. Added new density can be built with negligible impacts and without necessitating system upgrades; local governments should explore how much new housing can be built without impacting existing infrastructure, and investigate simple and inexpensive methods to mitigate impacts.

Ensuring that infrastructure requirements are aligned with actual need, or challenging historical interpretations of standards can save money and better incentivize new housing. For example, many communities have experienced the “road diet”: reducing vehicle infrastructure and narrowing roads, while saving money — and without experiencing negative impacts or increased congestion.

Cities that are more efficient with land and infrastructure spend less money to maintain existing infrastructure. Further, for example, demand management measures such as integrating low-impact development practices can be used to mitigate increased cost from servicing impacts. Savings can be realized in taxation or put towards maintenance or other community needs.



3.4. Growth Management and Development Financing

To account for the increase in infill development, it is important for local governments to consider how best to leverage the financial tools available to help fund the required infrastructure. In British Columbia, examples of financial tools that local governments can leverage to address funding needs for infrastructure and services include Development Cost Charges (DCCs) (see callout box below), Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs), latecomer agreements, municipal development works agreements, frontage improvement fees, and requirements for excess and extended services. The Manual provides a more detailed overview.

The intent behind SSMUH zoning legislation is to better enable construction of smaller scales of housing.

With this in mind, it is important to apply infrastructure financing tools at a scale that facilitates this. This means reconsidering financing models and policies based exclusively on the “growth pays for growth” model that requires developer-funded off-site improvements for projects to proceed. These new systems will take time to develop and implement in each context. While there may be some GDH development that cannot proceed because of insurmountable infrastructure limitations, effort to support GDH projects that can proceed is an important consideration for local government to make. Ultimately, it will benefit all parties involved to develop a financial framework that is predictable and consistent.

Development Financing in B.C.

In B.C., local governments can collect DCC funding for projects related to roads, sewer, water, drainage, parks, fire services facilities, police or protective services facilities, and solid waste and recycling facilities (noting these facilities must be capital assets owned or controlled by the local government). Provisions for new Amenity Cost Charges also allow for funding to other public amenities.

It will be important to reflect and analyze expected amounts of infill that will be generated through new zoning permissions as this will influence funds generated through an existing DCC program or updates to a municipal DCC program. Servicing master plans will need to be amended to reflect this. See additional details on infrastructure analysis in sections 3.8.2 and 3.8.3; analysis should consider the incremental and distributed nature of GDH infill development. Some communities across the country are also taking actions to better utilize existing servicing capacity through adjusting waterflow requirements while maintaining safety standards (Edmonton) or promoting better on-site management of stormwater (Ottawa, St Catharines), which can unlock infill without system upgrades. This is not an activity that necessarily needs to be undertaken prior to SSMUH zoning adoption.

Many existing DCC programs do not currently charge DCCs for accessory dwelling units and only charge for

multi-family unit types above a certain threshold. In lieu of a fulsome DCC bylaw update, simply ensuring DCC fees can be collected for new typologies is prudent; communities may consider not charging for smaller units to encourage affordability. It remains important to ensure that DCCs are fair and transparent, based on good data, and established at rates that will not deter development.

Some short-term updates to the DCC bylaw may be considered to account for the infill development that the regulations encourage:

- Electing to charge DCCs on a building containing fewer than four units.
- Accounting for the impact of accessory dwelling units (noting that GDH impact is incremental and given changing household sizes and more efficient fixtures, may not be a significant increase to existing usage).
- Review how DCCs are collected (either at time of subdivision or building permit).
- Verifying that the threshold for cost of work that triggers a DCC is appropriate.

Longer term changes to DCC programs should ensure that they do not penalize GDH and recognize differences in impact based on unit size and location.

Legal Requirements versus Manual Recommendations in British Columbia

Requirements: Local governments must update zoning bylaws to include the minimum number of units required by SSMUH legislation.

Recommendations: Adopt the Site Standards in Part 4 of the Manual to include recommendations for zoning specifications (e.g. height, setbacks, site coverage, parking, etc.).

Requirement: Local governments are required to demonstrate that the Site Standards in Part 4 have been considered in the development of their zoning specifications. Local governments can propose alternate zoning regulations so long as they have a rationale for why they did not follow the Site Standards recommendations.

As stated in the Manual, the site standards are designed to ensure alignment with the legislation and “*provide a starting point for zoning bylaw regulations, for which local governments retain discretion.*”

Review how the site standards could work in your community and use them as a starting point to develop zoning regulations, making adjustments where necessary based on suggestions in the Manual, this Guide, and through feedback from those with local expert knowledge.

The intent of SSMUH zoning changes is to enable increased housing supply, diversity, and improved affordability.

3.5. Common Concerns that Arose in B.C.

3.5.1. Myth - Local governments have no authority to regulate development in areas impacted by SSMUH

While Bill 44 requires local governments to zone for additional housing units on a lot, this does not provide property owners with unrestricted rights to the minimum density. Local governments can continue to regulate zoning specifics (such as setbacks, heights, minimum unit size, etc.) so long as the minimum number of units prescribed by Bill 44 are permitted, the local government has considered the site standards in the Manual, and the regulations do not unreasonably restrict or prohibit the units.

The permit process and BC Building Code requirements have not changed, and local governments retain the ability to ensure that other bylaw requirements are met (such as infrastructure standards in the Subdivision and Servicing Bylaw).

The required zoning amendments present an opportunity for local governments to improve the integration of various bylaw requirements while supporting housing supply and more efficient use of infrastructure.



Sample Home Design: Tweedsmuir from toolbox.smallhousing.ca

The interpretation of the Manual in the context of the application of Bill 44 requires close attention. The Manual outlines provincial *requirements* but also makes a series of *recommendations*. This Guide helps to provides context on navigating the changes by building on the recommended approaches in the Manual to successfully meet provincial requirements and adapt to community context. Outside B.C., local governments will need to be aware of their applicable provincial and territorial requirements, and legislated authorities.



Sample Home Design: Richmond
from toolbox.smallhousing.ca

3.5.2. Myth - Our community can no longer build single detached homes

The new B.C. legislation stops local governments from zoning for *only* single-detached housing and requires that zoning must allow, as-of-right, a minimum number of housing units.¹ This does not prevent single-detached housing from being a permitted use, provided additional housing up to the minimum units required is also permitted. What ultimately gets built once new options are available will be at the discretion of the development industry in response to market demand.



Sample Home Design: Mount Pleasant
from toolbox.smallhousing.ca

3.5.3. Myth - Our community can no longer require development permits for SSMUH

Local governments also retain their authority for requiring development permits. However, local governments must ensure that development permit area guidelines avoid unreasonably restricting or prohibiting the intent of SSMUH zones.

While incorporating SSMUH regulations, there are many opportunities to incorporate development permit processes with a streamlined approach to ensure that the necessary checks and balances are made within the legislative framework and intent of DPAs. Local governments should consider limiting the extent of design regulations for GDH and support design freedom where possible to avoid lengthening approval timelines. Development permits offer opportunities to coordinate the development process without adding complexity, and for ensuring that items beyond building code and servicing are addressed and integrated, such as form and character, landscaping, site layout, utility coordination and hazardous conditions.

¹ Local Governments cannot create zoning conditions, such as a density bonus to achieve the minimum units, with the exception that in cases where a minimum of six units are required near high frequency bus stops, the 6th unit can be conditional on providing affordable or special needs housing: (S.581.5(3) of the Local Government Act)

3.5.4. Concern - Our existing infrastructure cannot support the anticipated development proposed in the zoning bylaw revisions

It is important to highlight that SSMUH legislation in B.C. requiring zoning to allow more than two units only applies to lots serviced with both sewer and water (operated by a local government). If one of those services is not provided, the only mandatory density increase is to permit an accessory dwelling unit (attached, or detached) in addition to single-detached.

Many communities are concerned that existing infrastructure cannot accommodate GDH. In reality, GDH developments are likely to occur incrementally and be spread throughout existing neighbourhoods. Infill development patterns will be starkly different than new greenfield subdivision developments. Where greenfield sees all infrastructure planning and installation in advance of rapid construction of several homes, infill change and growth will occur slowly over time and be dispersed throughout communities. (Developers may change their plans for undeveloped greenfield sites, and servicing plans will need to be amended accordingly.)

The incremental nature of GDH in areas with existing lot and road layouts, which in many cases were not originally developed in anticipation of higher density uses, does require local governments to plan for a range of GDH development scenarios. Regardless, uptake in existing neighbourhoods will be gradual and impacts will likely be predictable. This provides local governments the opportunity to adapt regulations, update infrastructure master plans, respond to challenges, and undertake financial and capital planning where and when it is needed. Infrastructure issues may possibly be addressed through policy and operational changes, rather than expansion or replacement of physical infrastructure.

Asset management systems can support local governments in analyzing infrastructure age, conditions and capacity, and provide systems and financial planning for anticipated capital upgrades and maintenance. GDH development typically takes place in older neighbourhoods or greenfield sites due to land economics. Many of these neighbourhoods in Canada have been experiencing household occupancy rate declines in recent decades and GDH initiatives can help bring people and investment back to these areas. This can benefit infrastructure renewal, while existing infrastructure capacity can typically benefit from low-flow plumbing fixtures, water conservation measures, and increasing the use of water metering.

It has been common practice for local governments to approve zoning only if the applicant has confirmed or provided infrastructure capacity to support the development. That will not be possible for GDH developments where the zoning is already in place and approval is no longer discretionary. To avoid risks of construction occurring in areas where sewer, storm, and water services are at capacity, local governments are still able to regulate development through the building permit approval process, provided that servicing bylaws are structured properly and adhered to in practice.



Sample Home Design: Mosaic
from toolbox.smallhousing.ca



Sample Home Design: Glynn concepts
from toolbox.smallhousing.ca

3.6. Balancing the priorities of GDH and Higher Density Housing

The focus of GDH is increasing housing options in existing single-detached areas, but it is important that communities do not lose sight of planning for other higher density housing forms. In many cases, mid-block (i.e. four to six storey apartment) housing forms can integrate well into neighbourhoods while making a significant contribution to increasing housing options.

Through the process of GDH zoning bylaw revisions, many communities may identify sites that are better suited for higher density housing. This could include larger lots in close proximity to existing amenities and/or transportation options. Larger lots may be captured in “Restricted Zones” and there may exist concern with these sites being underdeveloped. During the bylaw adoption process, some communities may choose to incorporate pre-zoning for housing forms that are more dense than GDH. Others may align this work with a later Official Community Plan update.

The process for GDH zoning will likely initiate conversations about housing supply, diversity, and density in existing neighbourhoods. It is important to distinguish what needs to be in place for Bill 44 requirements and what can wait to be addressed. The process of coordinating housing changes with infrastructure needs through an integrated approach will assist in understanding how more dense forms of infill can be accommodated. Ultimately, a community’s housing supply should serve the diverse of needs of the population.



Sample Home Design: Belton from toolbox.smallhousing.ca



This urban infill neighbourhood includes a mix of housing forms, including: single-detached, accessory dwelling units, suites, townhomes and apartments. This three storey building provides nine units (with underground parking) on a 950 sq m lot. SSMUH legislation would only require a maximum of four units on this site. It is important to continue to support density beyond the required units in infill areas subject to SSMUH legislation.

3.7. Example Zoning Bylaw Update Workplan

Before embarking on your journey to create more attainable housing opportunities in your community, take a moment to anticipate and plan for the road ahead.

This Guide provides detailed recommendations for approaches and considerations in revisions to zoning bylaw updates for gentle density housing, however, it is helpful to start with a big-picture work plan to avoid getting bogged down by details.

Below is a suggested work plan that can be adapted for municipalities responding to provincial requirements or considering GDH zoning:

1. Identify which zones from your community's zoning bylaw are "Restricted Zones." Outside of B.C., consider if there are comparable directives from other orders of government on zones which should be considered for gentle density housing.
2. Develop maps, using a geographic information system (GIS) if possible, to identify locations of lots that fall within the different categories of "Restricted Zones" and those which are excluded.
3. Conduct a preliminary review of your zoning bylaw and undertake GIS analysis (see detailed steps in the Manual) to:
 - a. Identify the number of lots within each zone from your zoning bylaw that are captured as "Restricted Zones." This will give you a sense of which zones are impacted the most, and how many different zones may need to be amended, consolidated, or replaced.
 - b. Identify the typical parcel sizes in each zone where GDH will need to be applied.
 - c. Identifying geographic distribution of lots that are most likely to develop, using existing data such as assessment ratios, building age, vacant properties, and recent high-value building permits.
 - d. Review your zoning bylaw for other implications, such as General Regulations surrounding secondary suites, accessory dwelling structures, parking, and definitions.
4. Host a workshop with your Engineering, Planning, Building, and Fire Department staff. Topics for the workshop could include:
 - a. Build your team's knowledge of GDH. Ensure everyone understands legislative requirements, timing, and the nuance of needed shifts in practice for zoning, infrastructure, and development approvals.
 - b. Discuss Site Standards from the Manual as a starting point for what GDH development could look like on a given lot.
 - c. Review the locations of Restricted Zones in the context of existing infrastructure.
 - d. Confirm your community's understanding of infrastructure capacity constraints and what data is available for understanding it.
 1. If major infrastructure constraints are identified that pose a risk to health

and safety, determine the level of risk (i.e. consequence against likelihood of re-development) and confirm if your local government needs to request an extension from the province if applicable.

II. Identify other bylaws that may need to be amended.

These will likely include:

- i. Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw
- ii. Development Permit Area Guidelines
- iii. Delegation Bylaw (for development permits)
- iv. Fees and Charges Bylaw
- v. Procedures Bylaw
- vi. Tree Management Bylaw
- vii. Building Bylaw
- viii. Civic addressing policies

See section 5 for additional details.

5. Host a workshop with your Planning team to develop approaches for zoning revisions. Review the Manual and this Guide to inform your community's preferred zoning regulations for zoning bylaw updates. Topics could include:
 - a. Confirm parameters of use (building type), height, setbacks, site coverage, and parking.
 - b. Test zoning scenarios to ensure calibration of height, density, and site coverage/ setbacks provisions can reasonably and functionally result in the minimum number of units on a typical lot.
 - c. Consider using tools such as SketchUp, or hire local design consultants, to prepare simple volumetric models to test the draft regulations to get a sense of the size, scale and unit mix that would result and support the process along with other visual aids. Identify any code or site planning issues.
 - d. Confirm Zoning Approach from the following:
 - I. New Single GDH Zone with a scale of standards (for different lot sizes or situations) to replace all existing single-detached and duplex zones, or
 - II. Revisions to existing zones; or
 - III. Creation of multiple GDH Zones to reflect community context
 - e. Identify parcels that should be upzoned for higher density than four units.
6. Host a meeting with your local power utility² about your plans and to understand their recommendations to expedite electrical connections including:
 - a. Allowing use of existing overhead infrastructure.
 - b. Aligning local government clearances requirements to Canada Standards Association for safety clearances between power equipment and water and sewer pipes.
 - c. Requiring builder to allocate space for a low-profile transformer on lot.
 - d. Requiring builder to include 3m safety clearances between the building(s) and overhead and/or underground conductors.



²These recommendations provided by BC Hydro. Refer to your local power utility for recommendations applicable in your area.

7. Communicate changes in housing legislation and applicable local government requirements to Council.
8. Communicate legislation and policy changes with the community.
9. Prepare draft bylaws, including revising other relevant bylaws.
10. Ensure a development approval process is in place that includes internal and external referrals. Work with permitting staff to explain how the projects will be processed, which group will review, what information must be provided to accept the application, etc. External agencies should be given as much time to review as possible.
11. Consider referring draft bylaws to solicitors for legal review.
12. Complete Council approval process, noting the following:
 - a. Public hearings must not be held for bylaws with a sole purpose to adopt the SSMUH zoning.
 - b. Must provide notice that a public hearing will not be held.
 - c. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure approval is still required, where applicable.
13. Notify the Minister of Housing as described in the Manual.
14. Monitor and update bylaws and regulations as required.
15. Share information with the development community. Better practice would be to obtain input from the development community earlier in the process, if possible.
16. Consider developing new application guides and internal procedure manuals.

Workplan Option: Council Engagement

Councils want to be kept informed of the legislative changes, requirements, and associated timelines. It is also important for Councils to understand the implications of not adopting GDH zoning.

Rather than engage a Council on the particular aspects of GDH zoning, a suggested approach is to focus on how the changes to zoning parameters (such as lower height, restrictive setbacks) are restrictive to housing. Should Council have a particular priority (e.g. visual impacts or trees) it is suggested to advise them of the trade-offs (such as decreasing height will likely mean bigger building footprints and less open space/trees on a lot).

Focusing Council's input towards broad growth tools such as the Official Community Plan and development finance can help alleviate concerns over adopting GDH requirements; these are the tools and regulations which can strongly impact growth. While it is important for Council to understand the broad impacts of policy decisions from zoning bylaw changes, debating the details of GDH zoning could become a zero-sum conversation given the distributed and incremental nature of GDH development. Reminding Council that adjustments to zoning parameters can still be made in the future may also be helpful.

3.8. Additional Supporting Analysis

To support and inform bylaw amendments and ongoing conversations about growth management, local governments may choose to complete additional analysis which could include, but is not limited to:

3.8.1. Likelihood of Re-Development Analysis

This analysis combines land economics data with geospatial analysis to identify which lots are more likely to redevelop relative to others in the community. This analysis can help inform where GDH growth might cluster to help with conversations around infrastructure capacity.

In the absence of a detailed report, local governments can observe the following factors to understand where GDH type (three to four unit) infill development may occur:

- Older neighbourhoods built prior to the 1980s.
- Areas with laneway access.
- Areas with level, rectangular lots.
- Lots in that range in size from 500 to 1500 square metres (m²) (lots at the larger end of this scale may be more likely to be subdivided into two and then be developed with GDH).
- Oversized lots relative to the norm in a given area.
- Lots where the assessed land value is significantly more than the improvement value (double or higher is a starting point but varies based on the local real estate market) as this may indicate the right market conditions for redevelopment.
- Lots where the total property value per square meter is in the bottom 10 to 20% for the surrounding area.

3.8.2. Sewer and Water Infrastructure Assessment

It is recommended that a Professional Engineer complete analysis to identify areas where new development would potentially exceed infrastructure capacity. The analysis should take account of the incremental nature of GDH development, while seeking to understand thresholds of housing units that trigger the need for infrastructure upgrades. Items that can be considered include the following:

- Consideration for up-to-date demand calculations for water supply that are aligned with actual household sizes and current fixture flow rates.
- Level of service standards for water supply for fire protection.
- Reservoir and distribution network capacity.
- Sewer and lift station capacity.
- Permitting processes and how they are impacted by level of service minimums in pre-existing conditions.
- The anticipated rate of GDH units expected to develop in a given time frame and/or area and when infrastructure upgrades would be triggered.

3.8.3. Stormwater System Capacity and Soil Type analysis

It is recommended that a Professional Engineer complete analysis to identify areas with stormwater constraints both within the municipal storm system and where natural soil conditions may limit on-site stormwater management. Various approaches to stormwater management can be considered.

- Review existing stormwater management plans.
- Evaluate the shortcomings of the existing approach to stormwater management in single family detached development areas. Looking at these challenges can help inform approaches to GDH typologies.
- Review any available geotechnical reports from pre-existing development which identify soil conditions and infiltration capacity.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate design guidelines for storm water mitigation such as maintaining permeable surfaces, tree and soil retention, and landscaping requirements.
- Consider requirements to retain stormwater on site. Explore standardized approaches such as a detention tank where customized solutions may be too costly or time consuming.
- Discussions with engineering, building permitting and inspection personnel can help to inform stormwater management approaches.
- Evaluate what increase in impermeable surface areas will be realized from GDH development within a given area and consider impacts on public infrastructure.

3.8.4. Electrical infrastructure analysis

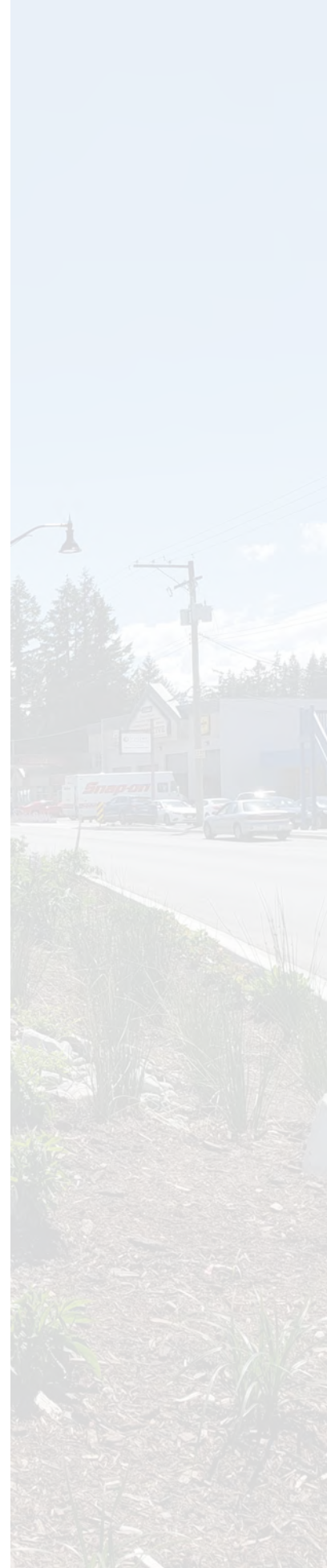
Engage with your local power authority's Distribution Asset Planning department to review your projected electrical capacity needs to meet future GDH growth plans. Early engagement will help reduce delays to service new buildings.

3.8.5. Consider Greenfield Development Areas

Large lots that are captured as Restricted Zones but not yet developed warrant consideration during the development of GDH zoning. Consider factoring future development potential of these areas and review what subdivision and development of these lands would look like in the context of GDH zoning. Consider the following:

- Unserviced residential zones in any area are required to allow a suite and/or ADU³.

³ The Province of B.C. recommends that only secondary suites, not detached ADUs, be permitted on properties less than one hectare in size that are not serviced by sewer systems operated by local governments. See Page 7 of the Manual.



- Any subdivision that create lots that are 4050 m² or less, has water and sewer service, and is in a Restricted Zone will in the future be required to allow a minimum of three or four units depending on the size of the new lots (three units below 280m² or four units on lots 280m² and above).
- It will be helpful to understand from the development community the market conditions and growth pressure for fringe development areas and the likelihood of GDH getting developed (as opposed to traditional single-detached).
- Ensure to work with developers who have applications underway to understand how subdivision and servicing plans will be impacted by GDH legislation and adjust any preliminary layout approvals/reviews accordingly.

3.8.6. Review the impacts of increased density on Hazardous Conditions

The presence of hazardous conditions will necessarily dictate the local government's regulatory response to GDH legislation and may impact how and where Restricted Zones are applied, or how zoning, servicing bylaws, design guidelines, or other bylaws are applied. The following considerations are specific to the B.C. legislation, and local governments in other provinces and territories should reflect on the applicability of their own hazardous conditions and applicable legislation.

Hazardous conditions are not specifically defined in legislation, and could include (but are not limited to) some of the following:

- Geotechnical hazards such as mudslides, landslides and rockslides;
- Areas of steep slopes;
- Soil bearing capacity;
- Fire interface areas, where the hazard cannot be practically mitigated through measures such as FireSmart (community and home level), development permit areas, etc.; or,
- Areas prone to flooding or erosion.

In reference to Hazardous Development Permit Areas, the Manual confirms that *“local governments should continue to use their authorities under, s. 491(2) to identify hazard areas where considerations related to health, safety, or protection of property from damage warrant land use regulations. These will continue to apply for lots and areas impacted by SSMUH zoning.”*

Hazardous Conditions are likely already known situations and already addressed through Development Permit Areas. Should additional concerns be present, municipalities will need to approach the assessment with the assistance of a Professional Engineer as defined in Section 55(1) Community Charter.



Should hazards warrant exemption, the questions that need to be answered with the assistance of a report from a qualified professional, are identified in the [Local Government Zoning Bylaw Regulation](#) as follows:

- *the land is subject to a hazardous condition (emphasis added).*
- *development of the land to a density of use required to be permitted [under SSMUH legislation] would significantly increase the threat or risk from the hazardous condition.*
- *the threat or risk from the hazardous condition cannot practically be mitigated.*

Municipalities may want to consider tailoring their response to hazards from different perspectives. Managing hazards in existing developed lands (for example older single-detached neighbourhoods) that lie within restricted zones may be a higher priority and will be different in response areas which are yet to be developed and would need (in B.C.) to allow GDH once subdivided in the future.

B.C. local governments should consult the Manual, review Section 481.4 of the Local Government Act, Section 3 of the Local Government Zoning Bylaw Regulation, and at their discretion seek independent legal advice.

3.8.7. Confirm if any Restricted Zones require an extension

Part 1, Section 4 of the Manual and Section 786 of the LGA detail when a local government may apply to the Minister for an extension. The Minister may grant one or more extensions to a local government if the Minister is satisfied that the local government is unable, by June 30, 2024, to comply with the SSMUH requirements for any of the following reasons:

- a. the local government is in the process of upgrading infrastructure that services the specific area or specific lots for which the extension is being requested.
- b. the infrastructure that services the area where SSMUH would apply is such that compliance by June 30, 2024, is likely to increase risk to health, public safety, or the environment in that area.
- c. extraordinary circumstances exist that otherwise prevent compliance in relation to the area.

B.C. local governments are encouraged to review the [Policy Bulletin](#) on Extensions issued by the Ministry of Housing for further details.

While the above "extension" provisions apply only in B.C., local governments outside of B.C. planning for GDH zoning should also consider if there are areas in their community where infrastructure upgrades are necessary to avoid increased risk to health, public safety or the environment, and explore ways to resolve the issues.



4. Suggestions for Zoning Bylaw Revisions

New gentle density housing will only be built in significant numbers if it is more attractive (financially, or for the owners' personal circumstances) to redevelop with several smaller units than what could otherwise be constructed under the current zoning (typically a larger single detached house, which is often simpler and has lower construction costs per square foot). This will likely mean that existing

requirements for building size or location will need to be adjusted to make room for additional living space. Local governments should consider where these can be relaxed to achieve viable gentle density options in their community.

4.1. B.C.'s Recommended Site Standards

It is important for local governments to tailor SSMUH regulations to current community contexts while aligning with provincial legislation. The Manual provides a set of “site standards” (in Part 4), which are effectively the basic parameters for a SSMUH zone. These provide useful context for considering new GDH zoning regulations. It is suggested that readers familiarize themselves with these standards before reviewing the balance of this Guide, which focuses on unpacking the implications of each standard and the deliberations needed to choose the best fit for the community.

The table below summarizes the standards:

Summary of Recommended Site Standards A, B and C contained in the Manual ⁴			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units</i> Suite and/or ADU	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Minimum Front Setback	5-6 m	2 m	4-6 m
Minimum Rear Setback (Principal)	6 m	1.5 m	6 m
Minimum Rear Setback (Accessory)	1.5 m	1.5 m	1.5 m
Minimum Interior Side Yard Setback	1.2 m	1.2 m	Combined minimum setback of 3 m
Minimum Exterior Side Yard	1.2 m	1.2 m	
Maximum Height (Principal)	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys
Maximum Height (Accessory)	8 m 2 storeys	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys
Maximum Lot Coverage	25 – 40%	50%	40%
Off-Street Parking	1 per unit	Maximum 0.5 space/unit if lot is within 800 m of transit stop with a bus at a minimum frequency of every 15 minutes (measured between 7am – 7pm). If not, maximum 1 space /unit ⁵	

Height measured as mid-point of a pitched roof or highest point of a flat roof on principal buildings.

⁴ Due to the complexity of Site Standard D, and the minimal number of locations in B.C. it will impact, detail has been left out of this Guide. Readers interested in the recommendations for greater than four units should consult the Manual for details.

⁵ The City of Vancouver is not requiring parking in their multiplex zoning, but experiencing that developers are generally proposing 0.75 spaces per unit.

4.2. Permitted Uses

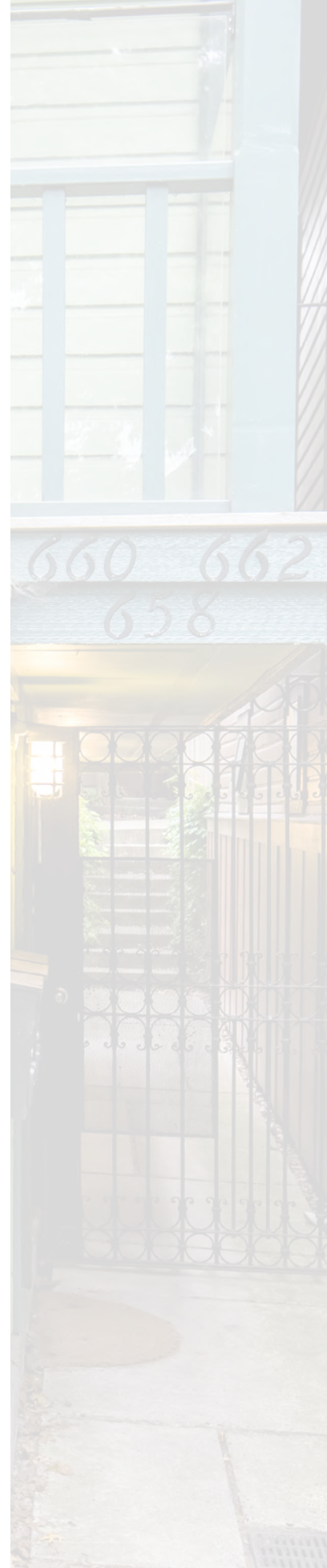
The Manual encourages a diversity of small-scale housing types to be incorporated into zoning bylaws. In Restricted Zones that are only required to provide either a secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit, the necessary changes to the permitted uses are obvious. However, in areas where local governments must provide three to six housing units to comply with GDH, the required changes to unit type can be more complex.

SSMUH legislation defines a housing unit as “a self-contained dwelling unit.” This could include several typologies. The prevailing understanding of the new legislation is that any combination of small-scale housing units up to and including the required minimum meets the legislative requirements.

Local governments can choose from a range of GDH typologies and allow any combination of housing unit types up to the permitted maximum. Examples of GDH residential uses include, but are not limited to:

- variations of triplexes, fourplexes, multiplexes, rowhouses and townhouses.
- duplexes (side-by-side or up/down) or a pair of duplexes.
- secondary suites in single-detached, side-by-side duplexes, or row housing.
- one or more detached accessory-dwelling units (ADUs).
- a courtyard arrangement (separate units at the front and rear of the property and a courtyard in between).

One approach to achieve four housing units could be to specify the permitted use as side-by-side duplex and further allow each duplex unit to contain a secondary suite. This would constitute four housing units and meet the requirements of SSMUH legislation. If this were the case for all restricted zones, this local government would meet the minimum requirements for SSMUH legislation. This conservative approach provides certainty of the type of development, but is still restrictive and could continue to perpetuate some of challenges associated with single-detached zoning that SSMUH legislation attempts to address, such as continuing to limit housing production and thereby applying upward pressure on housing costs, or continuing to provide housing that is out of reach for the majority of the population.



Alternatively, a local government could permit a range of typologies up to a maximum number of units. For example, a flexible approach would list a range of typologies from single-detached through to duplex, triplex, and “houseplex” (or “multiplex”), that could be permitted. In this case, a developer could choose any combination to allow up to four units. In some situations, this may be a side-by-side duplex with suites. In other cases, this could be a pair of

duplexes, potentially stratified or rental. In other cases, it could be a duplex with a separate pair of carriage houses, each owned the respective principal dwelling. A larger lot could allow for a “cottage court courtyard arrangement” which is separate dwelling structures on a single parcel (also potentially stratified). A separate parking area is sometimes provided.

Ground-oriented housing

The phrase “ground oriented housing” is terminology that captures many forms of gentle density development. Rather than listing duplex, triplex, fourplex, a definition for “ground-oriented” can specify any housing form that has an at-grade exterior entrance for each unit. Typically, ground-oriented housing falls only under Part 9 of the BC Building Code which generally has fewer regulations, professionals, and costs involved.

Regulations or definitions could, for clarity, specify one or more of the following:

- that this type of housing has three stories or less;
- includes no more than a certain number of units in a building or on a lot;
- does not incorporate shared accesses, elevators, lobbies; or;
- is separated only by vertical party-walls.

It is not necessary to distinguish GDH as being ground-oriented; however, this approach does provide some certainty of the typology of building that is permitted, and distinguishes it from other typologies, such as small apartments, that may have different servicing and/or building code requirements. Local governments may consider adding a permitted use and definition for small apartments in Restricted Zones that fits within the GDH unit scale to enable the greatest flexibility in the form of housing.

GDH is sometimes differentiated from what is commonly called “townhouse” developments by scale. These are a popular type of development on larger lots and utilize private drive aisle, numerous buildings, and usually exceed six units.



Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a phrase that has gained popularity as it applies more universally to types of housing secondary to a principal dwelling. The most prevalent term in British Columbia has been basement suite; however, since the popularity of suites has grown to include detached forms, terminology has become murky in common use. Recently, both "secondary suite" and "accessory dwelling units" have been defined in the Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act. A secondary suite means an accessory dwelling unit that is located in and forms part of a primary dwelling unit, whereas an accessory dwelling unit can be either in a separate structure or in a primary dwelling unit. The Provincial Home Suite Home guide provides additional information on secondary suites and ADUs in British Columbia. Secondary suites, carriage houses, laneway houses, lock-off suites, and garden suites are all forms of accessory dwellings. The term accessory dwelling unit can be applied universally to any one of these, either within, below, beside or detached from a principal dwelling. It is up to the local government to decide if they want to distinguish between a secondary unit within a dwelling and separate from. The key is to ensure that bylaws clearly state the differences, or similarities, and the application of regulation on the different types. For simplicity, this Guide uses ADU to refer to any type of secondary dwelling, whether within or detached from the principal dwelling.



Providing a broad range of units allows lot size and topography, combined with market, owner or developer preferences to guide development. This approach more closely aligns with the intent of SSMUH legislation and allows flexibility that has been lacking within local government regulations. From a housing delivery

perspective, there are more advantages than disadvantages to this approach. Provided that supporting regulation, such as development permit area guidelines and servicing bylaws are updated accordingly, this approach can better support a broader range of housing type, diversity, and cost within the community.

The example below compares different approaches to defining housing units and permitted uses in GDH scenarios:

	Example 1 (Traditional)	Example 2 (Adapted to GDH)
Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Zoning bylaw would include individual definitions for each housing type, including single-detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex, secondary suite, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Zoning Bylaw would include a definition of ‘ground-oriented housing’. » Zoning Bylaw would also include a definition of ‘accessory dwelling unit’ (ADU) and would specify the number of ADUs which can be associated with each housing unit.
Maximum Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 4 units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Any combination of ground-oriented housing units (or dwellings) and ADUs up to a maximum of four.⁶ No more than 1 ADU can be contained within each Principal Use Housing Unit.
Principal Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Single-detached » Duplex » Triplex » Fourplex » Townhouse » Rowhouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ground-Oriented Housing » Dwellings
Secondary Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Secondary Suite » Carriage/Laneway House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Accessory Dwelling Unit(s)

⁶ Four unit GDH is the focus of this guide, however communities can exceed the minimum units required by SSMUH legislation.

4.3. Density and Maximum Units

The Manual provides an in-depth discussion on density as it relates to regulating small-scale multi-unit housing, particularly with respect to use of floor area ratio regulations and the need for this approach in the context of GDH. In addition to what the Manual offers, the following considerations can be made when developing density regulations.

- Some local governments have instituted minimum densities in zoning as a way to support growth management. Although not widely used, it can be considered as a way to support efficient use of land and infrastructure while also supporting housing goals.
- Where provincial advice for eliminating floor area ratio maximums is being considered, local governments can also consider imposing a housing unit maximum for each lot. For example, a “maximum density” of four units, combined with setbacks, site coverage, and height regulations calibrated to lot size, can deter unwanted large-scale development in a given area.
- Local governments may also consider a maximum size on single-detached forms, to disincentivize large homes and/or align with policy goals of achieving smaller, more attainable family-oriented ground oriented housing.
- In 2019, the BC Building Code was amended to remove the maximum size restriction for secondary suites. Local governments may still consider a unit size maximum on secondary suites or accessory dwelling units, such as a maximum floor area or a maximum percentage as it relates to the principal dwelling. This ensures that the suite remains subordinate to the principal dwelling and serves to limit parking or servicing demand generated by larger suites.
- Local governments may consider a minimum number of bedrooms for a percentage of units; this can be useful in situations where more attainable family housing is required. It is important to scale bedroom count minimums to the developable area of a lot to avoid situations where small lots have limited buildable area, and the regulation creates small units with dysfunctional layouts (such as tiny bedrooms or insufficient living spaces).

Removal of Floor Area Ratio

The City of Kelowna, where ground-oriented infill development has been occurring for several years, recently removed the requirement for floor area ratio from GDH zoning and replaced it with a maximum unit density of up to six units per lot. The results of GIS and volumetric analysis had proven that the size of lots zoned for GDH would in most cases only be able to accommodate more than four units and on some larger lots up to six. Other site planning requirements and restrictions, such as parking, garbage storage, and landscaping requirements are in place. The removal of floor area ratio requirements eliminates the need to verify compliance during plan check reviews, along with the struggle associated with different interpretations of summing floor area measurements.



- Garages can use significant amounts of the allotted floor area ratio. Some municipalities exempt garages from floor area calculations (but still count them for site coverage maximums) or place floor area limits on garages. This option works well for municipalities that wish to retain on-site parking while also encouraging housing.
- Local governments that exempt self-contained residential dwelling units of less than 29 square metres from the collection of DCCs may consider imposing a minimum unit size for GDH developments or alternatively plan to forgo DCC revenues to encourage small unit options.
- Many existing zoning bylaws discuss density and maximum units on a per hectare or acre basis. Consideration should be given to how the increased density permissions for GDH would impact how this is currently calculated. These existing regulations may conflict with SSMUH minimum dwelling unit requirements. In light of this, the utility of this approach is put in question and elimination of these maximums warrants consideration. SSMUH requirements may result in new zones allowing higher density on a per-hectare basis than other medium-density multi family zones. A review of density regulations across all zones to ensure consistency may be warranted.

Care must be taken when combining the above suggestions together to ensure that regulations do not work against each other to create undesired outcomes, or severely limit the new housing opportunity provided through new regulations. There are opportunities for the local government to transition away from the drafting standard of using floor area ratio and/or units per hectare/acre and still adequately regulate development.

4.4. Setbacks

Setbacks impact the experience of development in several ways. They change the interface from and with the street and the spacing of buildings, and can impart an urban or rural character while impacting the efficiency of land use changes. Indirectly, large setbacks can influence housing cost, land cost, and infrastructure cost. Setbacks influence the design of buildings: large setbacks push a building towards the centre of a lot and can inadvertently create blocky buildings with large but unused front yards. Considering how setbacks can allow flexibility of placement of buildings, influence design and operation of buildings, impact parking and building access, improve efficiency in land use, and provide for landscaping and stormwater, these can all have a positive impact on the development of infill in a community.

Privacy impacts from reduced setbacks are subjective. Often, the impact of new development on perceptions of privacy is similar regardless of typology or setbacks (including new single-detached dwellings). Rather than increase or decrease all setbacks as a response to SSMUH requirements, and limit or constrain housing development, consideration for design impacts while determining setbacks is encouraged. The following sections offer commentary on potential impacts and design outcomes that are related to setbacks. Generally, some setbacks will need to be reduced to allow for a larger building or multiple buildings on a single property.

Setbacks also impact fire safety considerations like the use of non-combustible materials, the number and location of windows openings, and the fire flow demand of a building, alongside the ability of firefighters to access parts of the building. Prior to determining setbacks, (particularly side and rear yards for infill), local governments are encouraged to ensure that any water supply/fire flow limitations have been identified, and to consult with fire department and building inspector staff about the impact of reduced setbacks in areas with limited water supply.

Plan for setbacks from electrical infrastructure; for example, BC Hydro requires a 6m safety clearance between BC Hydro poles and a building.

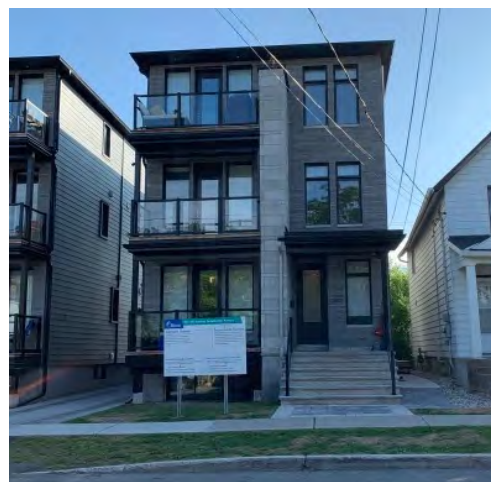
4.4.1. Front Setbacks

Front setbacks can greatly change the interface and function of a residential street. Lower front setbacks (less than six metres) provide more opportunities for interaction between buildings and their occupants. Larger front setbacks (greater than six metres) are often associated with a more suburban typology and create opportunities for parking and trees in front of the building, at the expense of outdoor space at the rear.

The Manual provides guidance for setbacks based on context (e.g. lot size, minimum number of units). Commentary in this section is intended to complement those recommendations.



This infill house has a generous front setback which provides space for landscaping and a walkway.



This infill house has a smaller front setback and is oriented in line with adjacent houses to be sympathetic to existing neighbourhood context.

When determining what front setback is appropriate for the community, consider the following:

- What setbacks could encourage density and facilitate GDH?
- Will reduced front setbacks better accommodate outdoor amenity space for multi-unit housing?
- Is there lane access? Are lanes maintained and used regularly (including snow removal)? If so, a reduced front setback could be appropriate.
- Does your community want to require a maximum setback (e.g. a building cannot be placed further back than a set distance) to promote a more efficient use of land? Front setback maximums protect lots, allowing them to incorporate additional dwelling units in a separate building at a later date.
- If front yard parking or garages are expected, vehicle overhang onto the sidewalk (and/or snow storage areas) can be an issue with large vehicles and setbacks of less than six metres.
- Consideration can be given to decreased setbacks for the portion of the building that does not contain a garage.
- Is your community concerned about front setback areas being used for parking, resulting in a less appealing streetscape? If so, a smaller front setback (coupled with other zoning regulations) may be warranted to deter parking consuming much of the front yard; parking would then have to be sited elsewhere.
- Does your community have street trees that may be impacted by development? If so, you may need to consider greater front setbacks to enhance the likelihood of retaining mature street trees during re-development.
- Does your community have boulevards? If not, setbacks can provide green space adjacent to the public realm.
- What is the location of sidewalks? A sidewalk located between a boulevard and infill housing can accommodate both smaller setbacks as well as street trees and green space in front of buildings.
- Where is the location of utility services, including electricity kiosks? These may need to be accommodated in strategic locations on parcels developing multiplexes, within front yard setbacks, or at frequent intervals along the street, in neighbourhoods experiencing higher amounts of infill density. Instead of increasing setbacks to accommodate kiosks, this can be addressed through Design Guidelines.
- What is the depth of lots within expected infill development areas? Reduced setbacks may support scenarios such as two duplexes (as opposed to a singular fourplex) which provides for alternative site layout, access, parking, and open space arrangements.

Manual Recommended Front Yard Setback Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units Suite and/or ADU</i>	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Minimum Front Setback	5-6 m	2 m	4-6 m

4.4.2. Side Yard Setbacks

Side setback considerations are especially important. From a firefighting perspective, they impact building fire flow demands and rear-yard access. Side yard setbacks, since they relate closely to the proximity of buildings on adjacent properties, also particularly correlate with building code limitations on doorway placement and window openings, which are related to fire safety, but also impact functionality and design.

In developing minimum side yard setbacks, local governments can consider the following:

- Combined side yard setbacks (the side yard setback of the property being developed plus the side yard setback of the adjacent property) that are less than 3.0 metres will impact the ability to place a doorway on the side of the building.
- Increasing side yard setbacks to accommodate a combined setback of more than 3.0 metres will have the impact of reducing fire flow calculation requirements for a structure. In contexts with lower fire flow availability (such as existing suburban developments), this could be considered.
- What is the width of buildable area on a lot once side-yard setbacks are taken into account? This will impact functionality of side-by-side units.
- Side yard setbacks of less than 1.2 metres (to the property line) will impact building materials and soffit assemblies to limit fire spread. This usually has a negative impact on design by limiting the number of windows that can be placed on the side of a building.
- Sufficient clearance to move garbage/recycling totes around the site.
- Narrow side yard setbacks may inadvertently limit accessibility and adaptability of units.
- Narrow side yard setbacks increase stormwater and drainage challenges.
- Narrow side yard setbacks limit opportunities for landscaping.
- Increasing side yard setbacks on one side of the building to accommodate a driveway could be incentivized by reducing side yard setbacks on another side; this is a policy tool that can be coupled with requirements for driveway and parking locations requirements to prevent garages facing a street.

Local governments can also consider zero-lot line setbacks to support “row-housing” type developments and increase land-use efficiency. It should be noted that any development which constructs to a zero-lot line in isolation of the development of an adjoining property will be required to construct a windowless firewall. In the interest of design and maintaining desirable building interface, local governments typically permit this setback scenario only if both sides of the firewall are constructed as part of the same development. Local governments can also continue to accept minimal side yard setbacks and building separation, and allow developers flexibility to balance design trade-offs with space efficiency, provided other policy needs (garbage, site circulation, stormwater, fire access, etc.) are addressed.

Manual Recommended Side Yard Setback Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units Suite and/or ADU</i>	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill 3 units (less than 280 m²) 4 units (281 m² to 1,215 m²)</i>	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services 4 units (1,215 m² to 4,050 m²)</i>
Minimum Interior Side Yard Setback	1.2 m	1.2 m	Combined minimum setback of 3 m

4.4.3. Rear Setbacks

In single detached housing types, large rear setbacks can provide for outdoor amenity space (i.e. backyards) and building separation to maintain a particular pattern and characteristic of low density residential development. This context may need to change to accommodate GDH, depending on the housing forms permitted, existing lot size, and existing housing placement and scale.

Reduced rear setbacks will provide more flexibility to accommodate new infill housing on a lot. When determining what rear setback is appropriate, the following can be considered:

- Does the parcel have a lane? The existence of lanes mitigates the impact of increased permitted heights and reduced rear-yard setbacks.
- Consideration needs to be given to shallow rear-yard setbacks for garages when there is a sloping laneway. Lower clearance vehicles can rub against driveway ramps and damage their undercarriages. A minimum one to two metre setback is generally adequate for sloping laneways. Turning radius should also be considered.
- Where is solid waste (garbage/recycling/green waste) collected? If collected from the rear lane, the placement of waste bins should be considered.

- Is three storeys being considered for infill?
 - » A shallow rear-yard setback may warrant consideration of reduced height requirements within a given distance of the rear property line. Coordination with design guidelines (such as the placement of second storey decks) can support reduced setbacks. This can minimize impacts of overlook and shadowing.
 - » Local governments may want to consider different setback and height requirements for buildings closer to the property line in contexts with and without a lane.
- Consideration can also be given to increasing minimum separation between multiple buildings on a site; this can provide for amenity space between buildings but will also necessitate reducing the front and/or rear setback in shallow-lot configurations.
- What existing, planned, or needed public parks and amenities are nearby?

Manual Recommended Rear Setback Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units Suite and/or ADU</i>	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Minimum Rear Setback (Principal)	6 m	1.5 m	6 m
Minimum Rear Setback (Accessory)	1.5 m	1.5 m ⁷	1.5 m

⁷ 3.0 m may be needed if parking off lane is required

4.5. Height

The Manual notes that providing more flexibility for height will improve the viability and diversity of housing forms and often has positive impacts on the functionality of small-scale multi-unit housing. The Manual encourages an 11 metre/3 storey maximum height for small-scale infill housing.

Many of the privacy considerations for rear setbacks raised in Section 4.4.3 are similar to privacy considerations for height. Local governments permitting higher buildings will want to ensure that development permit area guidelines or other zoning tools are coordinated with this change. Some of the following considerations can also be made to mitigate the impacts of height:

- Before establishing height limits that could impede infill housing development, consider the impact of existing height under existing zoning – often existing single-detached regulations can result in similar scale/height/overlook as infill housing in redevelopment scenarios. The impacts of height are often the consequences of new housing development generally and not necessarily specific to small scale multi-unit housing.
- The Manual suggests a height of 11 metres. Depending on how building height is defined and calculated in a bylaw, it is possible for three storey structures (both pitched and flat-roofed) to be accommodated with a 10 metre maximum in situations with a relatively flat grade and eight foot ceilings; however, 11 metres will allow for greater flexibility and higher ceilings.
- Half-storey requirements can be used, typically resulting in the highest storey being tucked into roof gables.
- Local governments can explore opportunities for semi-submerged basements – this can result in similarly functional floorspace for most types of infill but reduce height overall. Note that this may have a negative impact on accessibility for units if ramps or other mobility aids are not provided. An example of a semi-submerged basement is provided to the right.
- Regulating the floor area of the third storey or requiring third storey “stepbacks” can mitigate the perception of overlook, shadowing, or lost privacy and avoid challenges. This can make structural design more complicated and costly and should be exercised with caution.
- Regulations for a ratio of wall to window on exterior side



This carriage home has a small rear yard setback, but the garage access from the side yard provides adequate space for parking a vehicle in front of the garage.



These infill homes have an approximately 7m setback that accommodates parking between the building and the lane and provides ample turning radii for vehicles entering and exiting the garage.

walls, or guidelines to encourage clerestory windows, can help maintain privacy for surrounding residences.

- Regulations for size or screening of rooftop patios can help maintain privacy for surrounding residents.
- Consider exemptions for height limits for rooftop stairway accesses, shade structures, and storage areas.
- While the perception of the impacts of building height is subjective, having separate regulations for flat-roof buildings can help replicate existing suburban characteristics where it is desired. For example, permitting flat roofs only for two storey structures and pitched roofs only for height beyond two storeys may help with perceptions of neighbourhood integration.
- Design guidelines that encourage quality design and facade variation will assist with appeal and public perceptions. Requirements for building articulation should be made in coordination with Step Code requirements and the development community, as increased building façade reduces energy efficiency and increases costs. Design Guidelines can also be used to address impacts of building height.



Example of a semi-submerged basement.



These infill houses include clerestory windows which enhance interior daylighting without creating overlook into adjacent properties.

Communities have varying definitions for measuring height. Communities that measure height from ground level to the highest point of the structure may have experiences where, in order to maximize useable space in the building, structures are constructed with flat or low-slope roofs. Below are two images that represent examples of infill development with flat and gable roofs. Considering the impact of restrictive height on design characteristics is important to avoid unwanted scenarios.



Flat/Angled roofline crates more livable space for this carriage home, but if the footprint were larger, the building could be imposing on surrounding properties.



This carriage home exceeds the height of principal dwelling, but the use of high-quality exterior materials that match the principal dwelling helps to maintain the form and character.

Manual Recommended Height Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units</i> Suite and/or ADU	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Maximum Height (Principal)	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys
Maximum Height (Accessory)	8 m 2 storeys	11 m 3 storeys	11 m 3 storeys

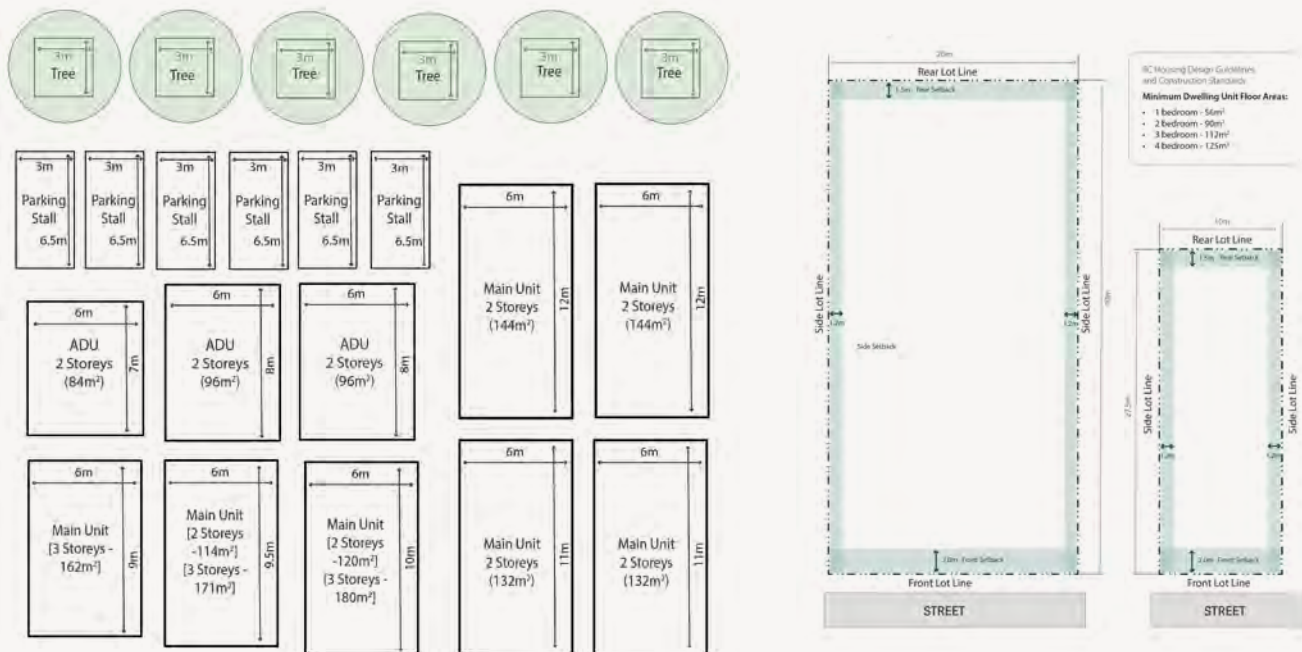
4.6. Lot Coverage

Site coverage regulations are often interrelated with the functional limitations of a development site. Careful attention to how site coverage is defined, what is included, and how it is calculated is important. Maximum site coverage regulations should consider the reasonable requirements for feasible development (alongside any other limits on density and height). For example, if a 600 m² lot zoned to allow up to four units has a maximum site coverage of 40% and a maximum height of two storeys, the units could be no larger than 120 m² on average (approximately 1,300 sq. ft.). This size unit may not be marketable in some communities, nor functional for three bedroom units. Additionally, these regulations would likely result in a blocky building designed to maximize its footprint and leave no space for garages.

The Manual recommends 50% site coverage for infill lots up to 1,215 m² which is an appropriate starting point for a regulation that will accommodate adequate and functional building space and still account for on-site areas for stormwater management, site circulation, and green space. Higher site coverage may be necessary for smaller lots, and a lower site coverage can be considered for larger lots. All scenarios will have trade-offs.

The key drivers for determining lot coverage will be lot size, allowable height, the number of units the site is expected to accommodate (coinciding with a reasonable unit size calculation), tree retention/placement, and stormwater management considerations.

You may wish to model different options for lot coverage along with building, parking and tree spaces on your community's most common lot sizes, as shown in the sample materials below.



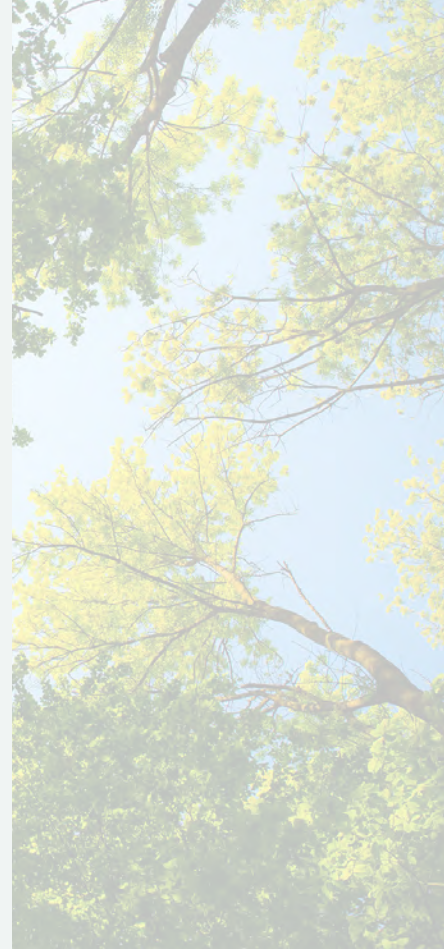
Sample materials for laying out the space required on a lot for housing, parking and trees

To Tree or not to Tree?

Lot coverage and height interact with each other, and with the ability to retain and plant trees with a GDH development. Smaller site coverage combined with increased height will accommodate more living area with more open space for trees. Saving trees reduces the impact of new development while mitigating urban heat island effect.

Tree protection bylaws are common practice in municipalities to ensure protection of existing healthy and mature trees, but they can be challenging to administer. Caution is warranted to ensure that policies intended to protect trees do not negatively impact housing or development approval processes. It will likely be necessary to remove some trees to provide space for new larger buildings (as is already the case with redevelopment to new and larger one family dwellings). Many developers want to save trees – for both financial and esthetic reasons – but are wary of onerous processes and additional costs.

Conversations surrounding tree protection are best approached as collaborations toward common goals. Consider incentives for retaining rather than punishment for removal. Reduced off-street parking requirements can also increase the area available for retaining or planting trees, as shown in the example from the City of Victoria in section 4.7 ("Balancing space for people, trees, and cars").



It is important that GDH sites have adequate permeable surfaces to manage stormwater. Communities have various approaches to stormwater management, and it is important that communities consider soil conditions, existing stormwater capacity, and site coverage holistically, along with reviewing any site-level stormwater guidelines and best management practices (BMPs) that are applicable in their region. In addition to maximum site coverage, some communities without stormwater infrastructure or with challenging drainage conditions may also consider incorporating minimum or maximum permeable surface regulations in zoning bylaws. The former typically applies only to buildings on a site, whereas the latter incorporates driveways and other surfaces that do not allow water to permeate into the ground.

If there is a wide range of lot sizes throughout the community, and infill may locate across these possibilities, a range of lot coverage regulations may be warranted. Generally speaking, as lot size increases, lot coverage regulations can decrease without having a negative impact on development viability. Providing lot coverage regulation within a bylaw that is scaled to size thresholds will accommodate zoning that can encompass a range of lot sizes. Prior to developing zoning regulations, it may be advisable to inventory the range of existing lot sizes where GDH is expected to locate.

Below is an additional list of questions for communities to consider when establishing maximum lot coverage regulations:

- Are locations where soil conditions are not favourable for on-site stormwater management known? In those areas, is it possible to connect to municipal stormwater systems?
- Does your community have areas with known stormwater capacity limitations that would need to accommodate on-site management techniques to avoid the stormwater system being overloaded? The City of Vancouver has made the installation of a rainwater detention tank a requirement for new multiplex buildings, to relieve pressure on the City's sewer systems during significant rainfall events.
- Which bylaw regulates stormwater management? Consider revisiting the bylaw to provide options for stormwater management for developments with three to four units, taking care not to impose prohibitive costs for small developments.
- What are the parking requirements that are to be imposed? Will this be surface parking or garage parking?
- Does your community want to require impermeable surface limitations?

Manual Recommended Lot Coverage Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units Suite and/or ADU</i>	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Maximum Lot Coverage	25 – 40%	50%	40%

4.7. Off-Street Parking

The Manual encourages reduced parking requirements, which can significantly improve development viability, increase flexibility in site layout and green space, and encourage retention of existing trees. The Manual also recognizes that communities with snow or limited transit may require more off-street parking per unit. It is important to note that the parking standards for Site Standards B and C are framed in the Manual as “maximum” standards (i.e. no more than one stall), as opposed to *minimum* standards regularly found in traditional zoning bylaws. The use of maximum standards seeks to avoid developers providing excessive off-street parking.⁸

The Manual encourages a maximum of one stall per unit in Site Standards B and C if sites are more than 800 m from frequent transit. Many communities currently require two stalls per unit for single-detached dwellings and one stall for accessory dwellings and suites. There are a range of approaches that could be taken in regulating parking and some communities may eliminate parking. Some communities may eliminate parking requirements altogether, allowing the market to determine parking supply for each site. This can help maximize infill potential -- particularly on smaller lots. There are successful examples of this approach in Edmonton and Vancouver.

Communities may also want to consider the siting of parking on the parcel. It is common to require access and parking from laneways, where they exist. Communities and neighbourhoods without lanes must manage the potential downsides of concentrating parking in front yard areas, such as safety risks due to vehicles crossing sidewalks; decreased on-street parking spaces; and reduced space for garbage collection.

⁸ Note that SSMUH Restricted Zones which fall into the requirement for six units in close proximity to transit are prohibited from establishing minimum parking requirements, per S. 525(1.1) of the Local Government Act.

Balancing space for people, trees and cars

The diagrams below highlight the tension due to limited space to accomplish competing objectives of providing space for people, trees (and usable outdoor space) and cars.



Image credit: City of Victoria



Another option is requiring that parking be located behind the building, which may improve the streetscape but requires careful site design. Relying on street parking and establishing street parking regulations are also viable options. Local governments may also want to regulate the permeability of on-site parking areas to improve groundwater infiltration and reduce risks of flooding.

In situations where reduced parking is being considered, local governments may also want to consider incentives or zoning requirements for storage spaces within GDH development (similar to apartment buildings). This can reduce the need to use garages for storage rather than parking vehicles. The City of Coquitlam, for example, in the RI-1 Zone requires an enclosed indoor space of 3.2 m² per unit in duplex, triplex and fourplex developments. Excluding storage areas from floor area ratio calculations can also help support or incentivize it: the City of Victoria excludes up to 4 m² per dwelling unit for storage space that is included within the unit.

Below is a list of questions for communities to consider when establishing off-street parking regulations:

- Should there be different parking requirements for certain neighbourhoods (for example based on proximity to daily amenities and schools)?
- Would your community accept cash-in-lieu of parking for GDH to go towards an active transportation reserve fund?
- Does your community want to regulate the location of parking on a site (i.e. reducing potential for parking dominating frontage areas)? This can be influenced by setting the maximum number and width of curb ramps for a GDH development, or by limiting the number of garages that face a street. The latter would require side-facing garages and a shared drive-aisle.
- Does your community want to regulate the permeability of parking surfaces?
- Should you require or encourage off-street parking access from rear lanes where they exist?
- Does your community have frequent snow or require snow storage areas? If so, do they currently maintain and remove snow in lanes? How do on-street parking regulations in winter months impact the need for off-street parking or front setbacks?
- What is the maximum width of a let-down for a driveway access for a GDH development? Three metres is adequate for a single vehicle to access; six metres is typical for a double garage. Narrower regulations will result in improved on-street parking availability but will require shared access to on-site parking areas.

Manual Recommended Parking Regulations			
Description	Site Standard A <i>For lots requiring a minimum of 2 units Suite and/or ADU</i>	Site Standard B <i>Urban Infill</i> 3 units (less than 280 m ²) 4 units (281 m ² to 1,215 m ²)	Site Standard C <i>Suburban and Rural with Services</i> 4 units (1,215 m ² to 4,050 m ²)
Off-Street Parking	1 per unit	Maximum 0.5 space/unit if lot is within 800 m of transit stop with a bus at a minimum frequency of every 15 minutes (measured between 7am – 7pm). If not, maximum 1 space /unit. ⁹	

⁹ The City of Vancouver is not requiring parking in their multiplex zoning, but experiencing that developers are generally proposing 0.75 spaces per unit.



Lane access provides parking for these pedestrian-oriented infill homes. Some of these homes include secondary suites. Snow removal in lanes is an important operational considerations for communities with snow.

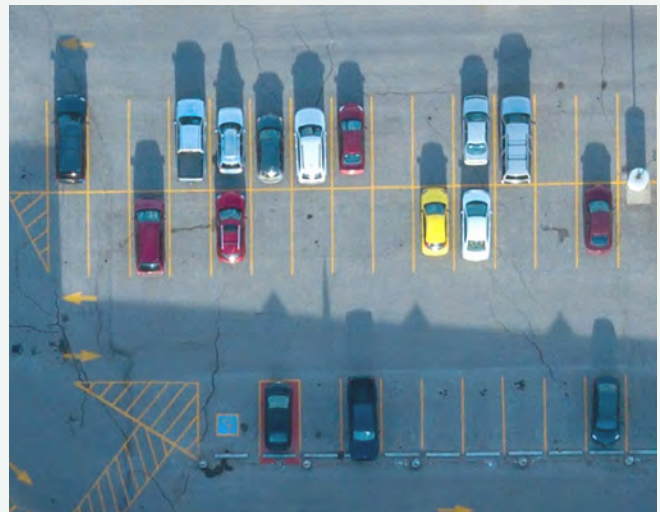
To Park or Not to Park – Edmonton Open Option Parking Case Study

Parking shapes the communities that we build and how we interact with the built environment. In 2018-2019 the City of Edmonton undertook a comprehensive parking review which found that the City's minimum parking requirements were ineffective at matching supply and demand for parking spaces. The review also identified an oversupply of on-site parking of greater than fifty percent city-wide.

In 2020, the City approved a zoning reform initiative called Open Option Parking, which removed minimum parking requirements on private property. Open Option Parking allows homeowners and developers to choose the amount of parking to provide on-site. The changes to on-site parking for homes are expected to be gradual over time as new buildings are built and properties in the city are redeveloped.

Open Option Parking initiatives have the potential to improve development on infill sites by removing economic barriers to development and can create significant long-term benefits by ensuring parking supply and demand are aligned.

These regulations were informed by a detailed utilization study which demonstrated underutilized parking in residential areas.¹⁰



¹⁰ [Parking Requirements Phase One Technical Study \(escribemeetings.com\)](https://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/parking-requirements-phase-one-technical-study)

4.8. Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision remains a powerful tool over new growth while also controlling a variety of development characteristics. Subdivision regulations vary by location and topography and given their technicality readers are advised to consult independent planning and legal advice for subdivision regulations. The following paragraphs are based on subdivision within the SSMUH legislative framework in B.C. and will have less direct applicability for local governments in other provinces or territories.

When new lots are created their size and shape will impact whether GDH can fit on them, regardless if it occurs immediately after creation or at a later date. Not every lot created needs to be sized to accommodate GDH. Other forms such as small lot detached homes, row houses, and front-back duplexes may be desired, and the impacts of subdivision regulation on these other forms should also be considered. The ways in which subdivision regulation may impact existing lots in light of new SSMUH requirements is another consideration. For example, a large lot in a neighbourhood zoned for up to four units per lot, could be subdivided into two smaller lots to realize eight GDH units.

Lot frontage and lot area minimums for zones will need to account for functionality and consideration of the viability of SSMUH regulations. For example, narrow lots (10 metres or less) can accommodate front-to-back housing configurations, with pedestrian access down the side of the building. Parking might be located in the front or rear yards to a maximum of three vehicles side by side; however, this may conflict with other zoning regulations limiting driveway or parking width.

It is advisable to have minimum lot size regulations that can accommodate the minimum number of units required by legislation to avoid creating future challenges with development approvals and development variance applications. Calculating the combined result of unit size, number of storeys, lot coverage, and parking requirements can help avoid these scenarios.

Minimum lot size regulations do not need to be changed to align with the provincial threshold of 280 m², which is associated with the break between three units and four units. Local governments could choose to establish a lot size minimum that is greater. This decision involves a variety of factors to be considered in the context of an individual community, but is another option available to ensure that new subdivision does not create implementation challenges.

Greenfield development areas that are within an Urban Containment Boundary will be impacted by SSMUH legislation, if the areas are within a Restricted Zone. An advisable approach is to consider servicing constraints, topography, availability and proximity of amenities, transit access, and the local governments growth expectations/demands prior to establishing lot size minimums for zones within these areas. These considerations could be taken into account in a subsequent phase of SSMUH implementation and done in accordance with broader planning processes surrounding Official Community Plan revisions.



4.9. Other Zoning Sections

It is important to revise the bylaw comprehensively to ensure that the impact of GDH zoning bylaw revisions are accounted for throughout the entire bylaw. Below are suggestions for revising the Definitions and General Regulations sections of zoning bylaws.

4.9.1. Definitions

As part of undertaking any zoning updates, it is necessary to review the zoning bylaw definitions to ensure they do not conflict with new regulations and it is also an opportunity to identify any necessary definition changes. This is exceedingly important for local governments where standards or measurements live within definitions. Some possibilities of definitions that should be reviewed are provided below.

- Residential building typologies (e.g. distinguish or consolidate secondary suites and accessory dwelling units, townhomes and row homes, multi-family versus multiplex, etc.).
- Short-term rentals and bed and breakfasts.
- Housing unit versus dwelling unit and aligning with SSMUH legislation and BC Building Code.
- A definition reflecting “SSMUH” or “ground-oriented” housing.
- Townhouse: Existing definitions can sometimes accommodate GDH development.
- Multi-unit: It is common to distinguish GDH from other multi-units such as apartments (with common access lobbies) and buildings greater than three storeys).
- Differentiation between GDH infill developments and larger scale townhouse developments (greater than six units) with internal drive aisles and extensive shared/common property.
- Duplex definitions (note that secondary suites are not permitted in up-down duplex configurations per the BC Building Code).
- Density (ensure alignment between lot coverage, floor area ratio, maximum units, units per hectare, etc.).
- Secondary suites (refer to definition from Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act).



4.9.2. General Regulations

Many local governments have incorporated general regulations related to development of specific use types, including accessory dwellings or secondary suites. This will require review and updates to some general regulations to ensure congruence with the updates made to residential zone regulations. Examples of general regulations that should be reviewed in conjunction with the SSMUH zoning regulation update include:

- The number of single-detached dwellings permitted (for example more than one for larger lots).
- Number of suites (for example a maximum of one secondary suite and one ADU, or one ADU) per principal dwelling.
- Regulations for the maximum number of buildings on a parcel (more than one to accommodate GDH).
- The maximum number of dwelling units (for example a single-detached dwelling plus a duplex, or two duplexes may need to be allowed under SSMUH legislation).
- In-home child care regulations in GDH development. Review also for alignment with other related provincial legislation, health authority requirements, and BC Building Code for this use.
- Secondary suite regulations in light of SSMUH legislation. (The BC Building Code only allows one secondary suite per real estate entity, however, each dwelling unit in a side by side duplex or townhouse may have a suite).
- Minimum lot size regulations for accessory dwelling units (for scenarios with and without servicing).
- Home based business regulations in GDH developments.
- Landscaping requirements within zoning bylaws.
- Minimum amenity space, minimum balcony size and minimum usable outdoor space requirements. (For example: a 5 m² balcony can accommodate a bistro set; a 9 m² patio space is large enough for outdoor seating and a table for four).
- Off-street parking size standards.



4.10. Approaches to Zoning Revisions

The table below summarizes three potential approaches for administering zoning revisions for GDH. Appendix A includes a comparative analysis of other approaches to infill zones from jurisdictions in B.C. and Alberta.

	Option 1 Single GDH Zone with Sliding Scale Standards Based on Lot Sizes	Option 2 Modify Existing Zones	Option 3 Residential Zone Consolidation
Description	This option refers to the creation of a singular zone. This zone would be incorporated into the existing municipal zoning and replace all existing single-detached/duplex zones that are captured as Restricted Zones.	This option refers to the strategic update of the existing residential zones in a community and incorporating GDH regulations. This would mean updating the permissions in existing zones.	This option refers to the full review of residential zones and streamlining the residential categories, including new GDH options.
Context	Most easily implementable in a community with a limited number of parcels identified within Restricted Zones (in B.C.) or where GDH development is expected to take on a similar form throughout the community.	Most suitable for communities with a small but diverse set of residential zones where GDH is intended to be permitted. It opens permissions throughout a community and would be suitable for a local government already permitting accessory dwelling units or infill.	Suitable for a local government with many residential zones that are considered appropriate for GDH and are potentially redundant.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Quickest option to adhere to legislative changes » Generally limited scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Builds on existing regulations » Tailors GDH to existing neighbourhood context. » Likely limited mapping updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Streamlines the residential zones » Reduces redundancy » Greatest opportunity for tailoring regulations
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Will likely require mapping analysis and updates » Regulations may not reflect unique conditions in each neighbourhood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Requires in-depth review of existing regulations to ensure no conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Requires the greatest amount of review and updates
Level of Effort	Lowest	Moderate	Highest

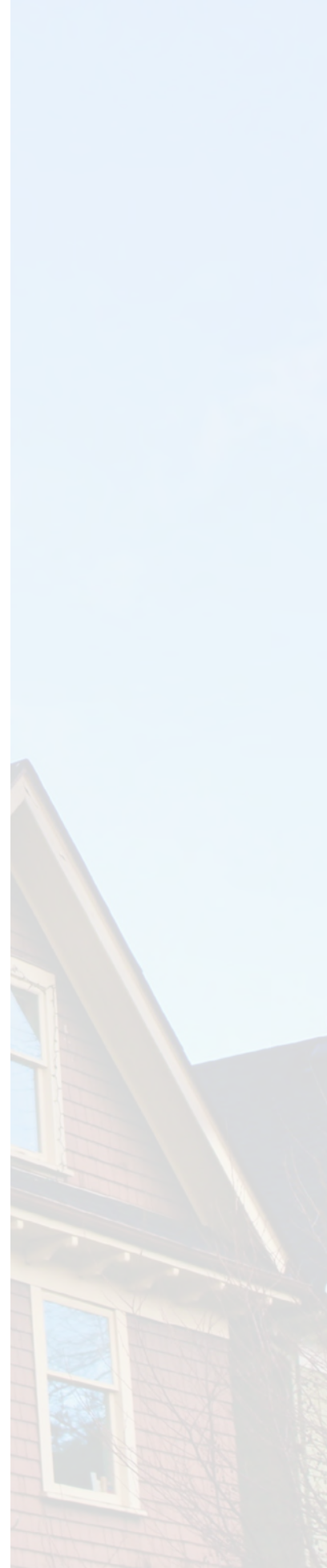
5. Updates to Other Bylaws

Ending exclusionary zoning to unlock the potential for gentle density housing to make our neighbourhoods more attainable is a needed first step in regulatory change, but more will be needed for this shift in how we manage our communities' growth. Communities across Canada will need to review their own regulatory frameworks to harmonize a more permissive zoning approach with related regulations.

In British Columbia in particular, once SSMUH zoning requirements are adopted, there may be inconsistencies from other municipal regulations and development permit areas. The regulations will continue to apply to GDH developments, but other regulatory tools may need revision, as to not inadvertently or unreasonably prohibit or restrict SSMUH zoning permission. Outside of the B.C. context, local governments should also carefully review related regulations to ensure that they are not prohibitive or prevent the viability of GDH through cumulative impacts.

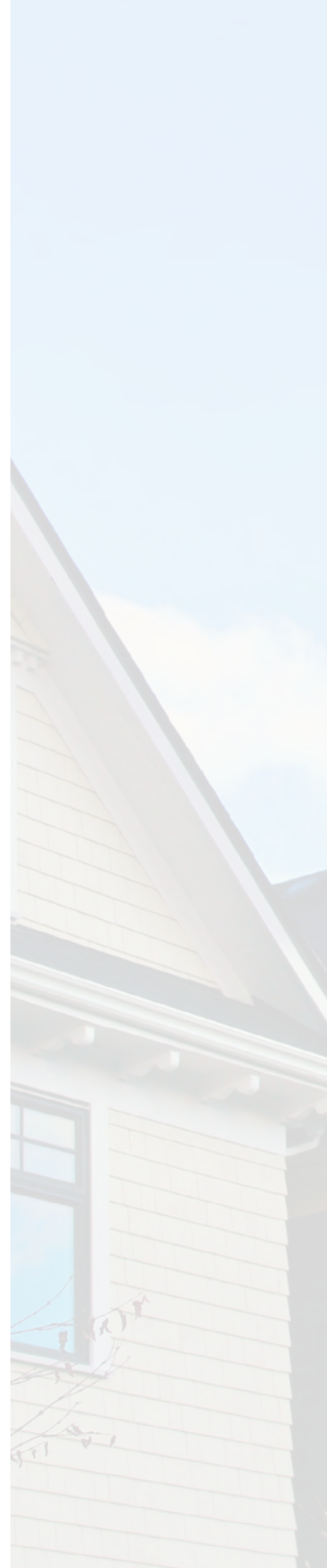
Additional bylaws that may be impacted by inconsistencies with GDH zoning permissions may include:

- **Building & Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaws**
 - » Ensuring coordination between these two and any requirements and implications for servicing GDH zoned areas.
- **Official Community Plan land use designations and related policies**
 - » GDH developments will not be consistent with the policies and land use designations in many official community plans. The Province has provided a grace period until December 31, 2025, for amending an official community plan to align with the new SSMUH zoning.
- **Development Permit Area guidelines**
 - » Development Permit Guidelines specific to SSMUH zoning and housing type can be considered and can also be incorporated into zoning.
- **Off-street Parking Bylaws**
 - » If parking requirements are reduced to accommodate GDH, local governments may want to explore on-street parking regulations (such as permits, time limited parking, and allowable distance to park from a let-down).
- **Procedures Bylaws (including Delegation Bylaws, particularly for development permits related to GDH)**
 - » Local governments will want to consider delegation of development permit approval for GDH to staff.
- **Tree Management Bylaws**
 - » Ensure consistency with application and enforcement of any existing tree bylaws.



- **Development Cost Charges Bylaws**
 - » Local governments will want to review applicable developments to which DCCs are applied in the context of SSMUH zoning.
- **Traffic Bylaw**
 - » Addressing street parking, proximity to driveway regulations, and driveway access regulations.
- **Heritage Alteration Permits and Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA)**
 - » SSMUH legislation impacts HCAs and according to s. 457.1, local governments must not exercise heritage related powers in a manner that “unreasonably prohibits or restricts” minimum SSMUH density. A review of the impact of legislation on heritage policies should be undertaken.
- **Bylaws and policies for building addressing.**

Local governments will want to consider and record any necessary amendments for those regulations external to the zoning bylaw to implement updates. This can range from changes in definitions in any respective bylaw to changes in servicing requirements. It is recommended that these changes be addressed either in conjunction with or soon after the zoning updates, which will help avoid discrepancies in future GDH development applications and lesson the need for staff to make ad hoc interpretation decisions.



6. Appendix A: Example Precedent Infill Zones

Zoning bylaws across the country vary widely in structure and content, reflecting applicable legislation and calibrated to the local conditions of the communities they serve to regulate.

This diversity of bylaw formats makes adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' GDH zone inappropriate in most circumstances. Rather, this Guide advocates for a deliberate process to tailor bylaw changes to local conditions, while allowing more flexibility in the housing options that are permitted in residential neighbourhoods. Some communities will have the resources to do extensive research and background work as part of a detailed approach to zoning reform, and others may choose to take a simpler path in adopting basic zoning parameters that will support gentle density housing.

There is value in learning from the approaches already in use by leading communities, and the table below provides precedent infill zones in select larger municipalities in British Columbia and Alberta. While the specific parameters,

definitions and approaches represented by each zone are tailored to suit the needs of these communities, they offer a range of possibilities that other communities may find valuable. Another leading example is provided by the City of Barrie, Ontario, which [recently updated its residentially zoned lands](#) to allow four units per lot, in advance of creating a new comprehensive Zoning Bylaw.

As more local governments across the country change their zoning to allow GDH, this Guide may be updated with additional examples and a sample GDH zone. It is not intended to be adopted in any community without evaluation and modification to fit the local context, but demonstrating that basic changes to zoning to allow more gentle density housing types can be uncomplicated.



A Zoning Comparison

Description		Kelowna	Victoria	Coquitlam	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver
Link to Zoning Bylaw		https://apps.kelowna.ca/CityPage/Docs/PDFs/Bylaws/Zoning%20Bylaw%20No.%2012375.pdf#page=154	https://www.victoria.ca/building-business/permits-development-construction/rezoning-development/missing-middle-housing	https://www.coquitlam.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1175/Part-11-Infill-Residential-Zones-PDF---RT-1-Zone	https://www.calgary.ca/planning/land-use/online-land-use-bylaw.html?part=5&div=11	https://zoningbylaw.edmonton.ca/part-2-standard-zones-and-overlays/residential-zones/210-rs-small-scale-residential-zone	https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/zoning/zoning-by-law-district-schedule-r-1-1.pdf
Zone Name		MF1 - Infill Housing	Missing Middle Regulations Applies only within following zones that are located within the "Traditional Residential Urban Place Designation" in the OCP: R1-A, R1-B, R1-G, R-2	R1-1 Infill Residential	R-CG - Residential Grade-Oriented Infill	RS - Small Scale Residential Zone	R1-1
Intent (purpose)		The purpose is to provide a zone for infill development within the core area of the City limiting development to 6 ground-oriented residential dwelling units or less.	Missing Middle Housing regulations add more diverse housing options in Victoria without removing existing zoning. The regulations allow houseplexes, corner townhouses and heritage conserving infill housing in Traditional Residential areas. This means up to six homes can be built on an average residential lot.	This zone provides for ground-oriented infill residential uses in developments comprised of up to a maximum of four principal dwelling units per lot.	R-CG is a residential designation that allows for a variety of housing forms such as single-detached, semi-detached, secondary suites, and rowhouses and may include a secondary suite. a. accommodates existing residential development; b. accommodates grade-oriented development in the form of Rowhouse Buildings, Townhouses, Duplex Dwellings, Semi-detached Dwellings and Cottage Housing Clusters; c. accommodates Secondary Suites and Backyard Suites with new and existing residential development; d. provides flexible parcel dimensions and building setbacks that facilitate integration of a diversity of grade-oriented housing over time; and e. accommodates site and building design that is adaptable to the functional requirements of evolving household needs.	To allow for a range of small scale Residential development up to 3 Storeys in Height, including detached, attached, and multi-unit Residential housing.	The intent of this Residential Inclusive district schedule is to enable a variety of small-scale housing options while retaining the single lot character of the area. Housing options include multiple dwellings ("multiplex" up to 6 dwelling units, or up to 8 rental dwelling units), duplexes and single detached houses. Duplexes and single detached houses may include additional dwelling units such as secondary suites, lock-off units and laneway houses. Retention of character houses is encouraged by permitting infill and multiple conversion dwellings where a character house is retained.
Uses	Permitted Uses (See Definitions)	» Duplex Housing; » Semi-detached Housing; » Single Detached Housing; » Stacked Townhouses » Townhouses	» Houseplex, » Corner townhouse, » Heritage conserving infill	» One-family residential; » Duplex residential; » Triplex residential; » Fourplex residential	» Accessory Residential Building; Contextual Semi-detached Dwelling; Secondary Suite » A Rowhouse Building is a permitted use in the Residential — Grade-Oriented Infill District where a Rowhouse Building complies with all the rules in the district for that use and where a Rowhouse Building complies with the rules of section 347.3.	Residential: Backyard Housing, Duplex Housing, Multi-unit Housing, Row Housing, Secondary Suites, Semi-detached Housing, Single Detached Housing	» Duplex » Duplex with Secondary Suite » Infill Housing » Multiplex » Laneway House » Single Detached House
	Accessory Uses	» Accessory Buildings or Structures; » Secondary Suite	» Secondary dwelling unit	» Secondary suite; » Carriage house; » Garden cottage; Accessory residential	» Backyard Suite; Duplex Dwelling; Semi-detached Dwelling; Single Detached Dwelling; Townhouse	N/A	N/A
Max Units (if applicable)		6	» 6 dwelling units for houseplex » 12 dwelling units for corner townhouse	4 maximum principal dwelling units per lot	N/A	8 dwelling units max on an interior lot	» 6 for ownership tenure; » 8 for rental tenure.
Density	FAR/FSR	N/A	» Houseplex: 1.0 » Corner townhouse/ heritage conserving infill: 1.1	» One family with suite: 0.5 » One-family with carriage: 0.6 » Duplex: 0.65 » Triplex, fourplex: 0.75 May be increased up to 40m ² for accessory off-street parking uses	N/A	N/A	» Duplex: 0.6 » Duplex with secondary suite: 0.7 » Other infill uses: 0.7 » Infill combined with heritage retention: 0.85 » If all units are rental tenure: 1.0 » If one unit is below-market ownership (see definition): 1.0
	Density Other	No density max for lots fronting onto a transit supportive corridor.	Total maximum of 235m ² per unit, and a total maximum of 1,410m ²	N/A	75 units per hectare	Minimum 75m ² of lot area per dwelling unit	See zoning comments

A Zoning Comparison

Description		Kelowna	Victoria	Coquitlam	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver
Setbacks (Principal)	Front Setback	3 m; The setback for a garage, a carport, or a parkade door that has direct access to the street shall have a 6 m setback measured from back-of-curb or edge of road pavement, or edge of sidewalk or 4.5 m from lot line (whichever is greater).	4.0 metres; (Allowable projections include 2m for porches, ramps, and lift devices and up to 4 m for stairs).	7.6 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential)	3 m	4.5 m	4.9 m
	Rear Setback	6.0 m except 4.5 m for wide lots (where the width exceeds the depth).	The greater of 10 m or 25% of lot depth.	7.6 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	7.5 m; On a laned or corner parcel, the minimum building setback from a rear property line is 1.2 metres.	10 m	10.7 m 0.9 m for buildings in a courtyard configuration
	Side Setback	1.8 m except 1.2 m from a lane; Sideyard setback not required for semi-detached housing on a lot line with a party wall agreement.	1.5 m	1.8 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	1.2 m; 3 m on one side of the parcel when no provision is made for a private garage on the front or side of a building For a corner parcel, the minimum building setback from a side property line shared with a street is 0.6 metres	1.2 m 1.5 m when row housing or Multi-unit Housing faces an Interior or Flanking Side Lot Line	1.2 m Can be reduced to 1.0 for lots narrower than 10.1 m
	Flanking Setback	3 m	4.0 m	3.8 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	N/A	1.2 m 2 m when a main entrance of a principal Dwelling faces a Flanking Side Lot Line	4.9 m
Carriage Suite/Accessory Building* Setbacks	Front Setback	N/A	Must be behind principal building	7.6 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	For Secondary Suites: minimum building setback from a property line, must be equal to or greater than the minimum building setback from a property line for the main residential building. For accessory residential buildings: must not be located in the actual front setback area.	For backyard housing: 1.2 m	N/A
	Rear Setback	1.5 m except 0.9 m from a lane	0.6 m	7.6 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	For Secondary Suites: minimum building setback from a property line, must be equal to or greater than the minimum building setback from a property line for the main residential building. For accessory residential buildings: » 1.2 m from a rear property line shared with a street » 0.6 m from rear property line in all other cases.	For backyard housing: 1.2 m 0.6 m: Minimum Rear Setback Abutting an Alley where there is no Garage or where a Garage door does not face the Alley	0.6 m
	Side Setback	1.8 m except 1.2 m from a lane	0.6 m	1.8 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	For Secondary Suites: minimum building setback from a property line, must be equal to or greater than the minimum building setback from a property line for the main residential building. For accessory residential buildings: » 1.2 m from a side property line shared with a street » 0.6 m from side property line in all other cases.	For backyard housing: 1.2 m	1.2 m
	Flanking Setback	3 m; The setback for a garage, a carport, or a parkade door that has direct access to the street shall have a 6 m setback measured from back-of-curb or edge of road pavement, or edge of sidewalk or 4.5 m from lot line (whichever is greater).	3.5 m	3.8 m (One-family residential; duplex residential; triplex residential; fourplex residential) Applies to lots not designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential:	For Secondary Suites: minimum building setback from a property line, must be equal to or greater than the minimum building setback from a property line for the main residential building.	Minimum Flanking Side Setback is the same as the Minimum Flanking Side Setback in the underlying Zone	N/A

A Zoning Comparison

Description		Kelowna	Victoria	Coquitlam	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver
	Height	11 m & 3 storeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 11 m (flat roof)(highest point) » 12 m (other roof) (average) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 7.3 m for Principal buildings and structures for a one-family residential use. » 9.5 m for Principal buildings and structures for duplex residential, triplex residential and fourplex residential uses. 	11 m	10.5 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 11.5 m and 3 stories » 8.5 m and 2 storeys for rear buildings
	Height (Accessory)	4.8 m	3.5 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 5 m for detached buildings and structures for carriage house use. » 3.7 m for detached buildings and structures for garden cottage use, accessory residential or accessory off-street parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 4.6 m, measured from the finished floor of the building » 3 m at any eaveline, when measured from the finished flood of the building 	6.8 m	4.6 m
Massing	Lot Coverage (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 40% site coverage for 2 dwellings or less; » 55% site coverage of all buildings for 3 or more dwelling units » 75% for all buildings plus impermeable surfaces. » The garage footprint area shall not be counted towards building site coverage but does count towards the total impermeable surface. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 40% maximum » 45% minimum open site space 	50% for all buildings and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 45% for parcels subject to the single development permit for a development with a density of less than 40 units per hectare; » 50% for parcels subject to the single development permit for a development with a density of 40 units per hectare or greater and less than 50 units per hectare; » 55% for parcels subject to the single development permit for a development with a density of 50 units per hectare or greater and less than 60 units per hectare; or » 60% for parcels subject to a single development permit for a development with a density of 60 units per hectare or greater. (maximum cumulative building coverage over all the parcels subject to a single development permit containing a Contextual Semi-Detached Dwelling, Cottage Housing Cluster, Rowhouse Building, Semi-Detached Dwelling, Single Detached Dwelling or Townhouse) <p>See ZBL for detailed provisions</p>	45% and 20% for backyard housing	50%; 75% maximum impermeable surface coverage; maximum site coverage for parking is 30%
	Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Minimum 1 stall per dwelling unit; » Maximum 1.5 stalls per bachelor, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom dwelling units; » Maximum 2 stalls per 3 bedroom+ dwelling units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 0.77 stalls per unit » (reduction available if transportation demand measures put in place per zoning regulation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » One-Family Residential 2 spaces per dwelling unit » Duplex, Triplex, Fourplex residential, multiplex residential 2 spaces per dwelling unit, of which a maximum of 100% may be tandem parking spaces » Secondary Suite, Carriage House, or Garden Cottage: 1 space per secondary suite, which may not be tandem parking » Accessory one-family residential 1 space per dwelling unit 	The minimum number of motor vehicle parking stalls is calculated based on the sum of all units and suites at a rate of 0.5 stalls per unit or suite	Maximum Number of Parking Spaces for Multi-unit Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 0 - 1 bedroom = 1 per dwelling » 2 bedrooms = 1.5 per dwelling » 3 or more bedrooms = 1.75 per dwelling 	not required
	Width (m)	Regular Lots 13 m; Corner Lots 15 m	12 m minimum lot width required for houseplex to be a permitted use. (Subdivision regulations otherwise contained in parent zone)	13.5 m for one-family residential See ZBL for min width for duplex, triplex, fourplex	7.5 m for parcel containing Duplex Dwelling	7.5 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 15.1 for 6 or more dwelling units; » 13.4 m for 5 dwelling units; » 10.0 m for 3 - 4 units; » 7.3 m for duplex/single detached.
	Depth (m)	27 m		22.7 m for one-family residential See ZBL for min depth for duplex	not provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 30 m; » Minimum Lot Width where the Dwellings are developed on separate Lots not Abutting an Alley: 5m; » Minimum Lot Width where the Dwellings are developed on separate Lots Abutting an Alley: 4 m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 33.5 m for courtyard configuration; » 30.4 m for all other buildings
	Min Lot Area (m ²)	Regular Lots 350 m ² ; Corner Lots 400 m ²		varies based on use and location in City; minimum lot size for fourplex is as low as 740m ² .	not provided	75 m ² per dwelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 557m² for 6 or more dwelling units; » 464m² for 5 dwelling units; » 306m² for 4 or fewer dwelling units;

A Zoning Comparison

Description	Kelowna	Victoria	Coquitlam	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver
<p>Other Zoning Regulations</p>	<p>Maximum gross floor area of a third storey relative to the second: 70%</p>	<p>Notwithstanding section 19 of the Bylaw, more than one building is permitted on a lot where any such building exceeding the limitation of one building per lot is a corner townhouse, houseplex or heritage conserving infill, subject to the regulations in this Schedule.</p>	<p>No more than one principal building is permitted per lot.</p> <p>Principal residential uses other than one-family residential use are permitted only if the lot is fronted by a street and, if applicable, a lane.</p> <p>Carriage house and garden cottage uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. permitted as an accessory use to a one-family residential use only; ii. limited to either one carriage house or one garden cottage, but not both, per lot; and iii. not permitted on a lot in addition to a secondary suite use, except as provided for under Sub-section (4)(g); iv. must provide one unhindered accessory off-street parking space for the exclusive use of the carriage house or garden cottage use in accordance with Part 7; and v. not subject to subdivision under the provisions of either the Land Title Act or the Strata Property Act. <p>c. Garden cottage, carriage house, triplex residential and fourplex residential uses are only permitted on lots designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential and Baycrest Low Density Residential in the Partington Creek Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>The Residential – Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CGex) District has the same purpose as the Residential – Grade-Oriented Infill (R-CG) District except that it does not accommodate Secondary Suites or Backyard Suites.</p> <p>Maximum floor area of a Secondary Suite, excluding any area covered by stairways and landings, is 100.0 square metres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in the R-CIL, R-CILs, R-CI, R-CIs, R-CIN, R-I, R-Is and R-IN Districts; b. when located on a parcel with a parcel width less than 13.0 metres <p>There is no maximum floor area for a Secondary Suite wholly located in a basement. Internal landings and stairways providing access to the basement may be located above grade.</p>	<p>3 m is the minimum distance between Backyard Housing and any other principal Dwelling on the same Site</p>	
<p>Comments (Other)</p>		<p>The Missing Middle Housing Regulation is an overlay zone that adds additional uses to existing specific zones throughout the City of Victoria that area within the "Traditional Residential Urban Place Designation". The additional uses are only permitted on lots that are wider than 12 metres. The Missing Middle Regulation also allows for higher density of up to 12 units for 'corner townhouses' on corner lots; these structures have separate setback and site coverage regulations that are not included here.</p>	<p>Storage space requirements for each dwelling unit in a building for duplex residential, triplex residential and fourplex residential uses must provide an indoor enclosed storage area of not less than 3.3 m²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Allows for diverse grade-oriented housing forms, including single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, and secondary suites. » Lot coverage maximum is relative to density, capped at 75 units/ha » Sets setbacks for front, rear, side, and flanking sides, allowing for adaptable building integration over time. » Requires parking at a rate of 0.5 stalls per unit or suite, with variations based on specific circumstances. » Accessory residential buildings can be attached to backyard suites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Aimed at accommodating small-scale residential developments up to three storeys in height within urban areas. » Various types of residential developments including backyard housing, duplexes, row housing, etc. » 8 dwelling units permitted on a single lot. » Exemption or waiver for off-street parking requirements, particularly for laneway houses. » Specific setback requirements to ensure adequate spacing between buildings and maintain neighborhood character. » Maximum building height of 10.5 meters with lot coverage capped at 45%. 	<p>Floor Space Ratio increases are conditional on the provision of an all-rental tenure building, or creation of a below-market unit in partnership with BC Housing, or payment of specified amenities to the City. The below market unit must include at least 2 bedrooms and be at least 90m².</p>
<p>Related Definitions</p>	<p>GROUND-ORIENTED, RESIDENTIAL means residential dwelling units of one or more storeys in height, each of which has its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. own private outdoor space attached to the dwelling unit (typically situated at ground level); b. an entrance / exit door to the exterior of the building, entered directly from a fronting publicly accessible street, walkway, or open space (i.e., without passing through a shared indoor lobby or corridor). Ground-oriented residential units can also have a second access and egress via a shared lobby or common corridor; & c. any setback reduction granted to ground-oriented residential units only applies to those dwelling units and not to other dwelling units or to any other floor area, except, the setback reduction can be applied to the main lobby of a building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » "Site Coverage" means the percentage of the area of a lot which is occupied by any structure » "Accessory Building" means a building that is subordinate to the principal use on a lot » "Multiple Dwelling" means a building containing three or more self-contained dwelling units. » "Two Family Dwelling" means a building consisting of two self-contained dwelling units which share a common wall or an area that forms the floor of one unit and the ceiling of the other and are not linked by a trellis, deck, breezeway or similar connection. » "Multiple Dwelling Accessory Use" includes the following uses and any structures which contain these uses on the same lot as the multiple dwelling: Recreational and pleasure uses ancillary to a multiple dwelling undertaken or carried on exclusively by or for the benefit of the persons or the guests of persons living in the multiple dwelling, where no fee, special charge or consideration is paid or demanded for its use and enjoyment over and above the ordinary rental for accommodation in the multiple dwelling; c) Accessory garden structures; and d) Uses essential to the proper, lawful and efficient use, management and maintenance of multiple dwellings. » "Dwelling Unit" means any room or suite of rooms used or intended to be used by one family » exclusively for the purpose of providing a place of residence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ACCESSORY BUILDING means a subordinate building located on the same lot as the principal building or use, the use of which is incidental and accessory to that of the principal building or use. » ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL means a residential use in which the building on a lot is used for one dwelling unit; may also contain a secondary suite. » SECONDARY SUITE means an accessory dwelling unit contained within a building of residential occupancy containing only one principal dwelling unit. 	<p>"Accessory Residential Building" means a use where a building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » i) accommodates a use that is subordinate to the main residential use on a parcel; » ii) is not attached to a main residential building except where the attachment is entirely below grade or directly below a patio; and » iii) may be attached to a Backyard Suite on a parcel where a Backyard Suite is a listed use in the applicable land use district; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Dwelling means a self-contained unit consisting of 1 or more rooms used as a bedroom, bathroom, living room, and kitchen. The Dwelling is not intended to be moveable, does not have a visible towing apparatus or visible undercarriage, must be on a foundation, and connected to utilities. » Residential means a development where a building or part of a building is designed for people to live in. The building contains 1 or more Dwellings or 1 or more Sleeping Units. » Backyard Housing means a building containing 1 or more Dwellings, that is located wholly within the Rear Yard, and partially or wholly within the Rear Setback of the applicable Zone, of a Residential Site. » Site Coverage means the total horizontal area on a Site: covered by buildings and structures that are 1.8 m or more in Height above Grade; or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Infill Duplex: A building consisting of only 2 dwelling units on a site already containing 1 or more existing buildings some or all of which are retained. » Infill Multiple Dwelling: A building containing only 3 or more dwelling units on a site already containing 1 or more existing buildings, some or all of which are retained.

7. Appendix B: Resources



Expert Roundtables & Guidance Papers

Small Housing addresses common and systemic challenges to increasing gentle density housing by convening experts from multiple sectors to advance solutions together, and communicate the findings to a broad audience that can test, champion and implement solutions.

<https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca/resources/guidance-paper-gentle-density-affordability-2/>



Case Studies

A series of brief case studies that highlight promising practices of various jurisdictions who are leading the way in implementing gentle density housing around B.C., Canada, and the world, and various tactics or approaches that can advance this work.

https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca/resources/?_resource_type=case-studies-stories-of-practice



First Nations Stories of Practice

Stories of Practice honour, document, and celebrate community-led gentle density housing projects in Indigenous communities, and provide other communities and organizations with an opportunity to learn about wise practices, teachings, and lessons.

https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca/resources/?_resource_type=case-studies-stories-of-practice



Sample Home Designs

A collection of sample renderings and site plans of built gentle density projects, ranging from 3 to 8 units, showcasing the potential of standardized designs to deliver innovative, inspiring gentle density solutions.

<https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca/resources/find-resources-by-type/sample-designs>



Financial Models/ Proformas

Downloadable financial models featured alongside sample gentle density designs allow local governments, building industry professionals, and citizen developers to understand the financial viability of gentle density projects in different communities and economic contexts.

<https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca/resources/find-resources-by-type/sample-designs>



Municipal Partnerships

Through both custom and cohort-based programs, Small Housing supports local governments to assess the need for policy and regulatory updates, to review approvals and other processes, to better understand their local development ecosystem and project financials, and to set up programs and approaches that support the growth of gentle density supply.

https://smallhousing.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SHBC_Kelowna_SHAP_Report_DRAFT.pdf



Planners Community of Practice: Gentle Density Network

The Gentle Density Network is a space for community planners to tackle collective housing challenges together. The GDN hosts online and in-person events where members gather, learn, and share ideas, challenges, and experiences around gentle density topics.

Accessed via the Gentle Density Toolbox, the Planners' Forum is a facilitated online community where planners can connect and share insights about implementing gentle density in their communities.

<https://smallhousing.ca/gentle-density>



Webtool: Gentle Density Toolbox

The Gentle Density Toolbox is an extensive online repository of resources, showcasing leading practices, innovations, and insights into gentle density housing. It is a growing informational resource, with content tailored to various key audiences and searchable by topic.

<https://toolbox.smallhousing.ca>

